

**Strafford Metropolitan Planning Organization
Technical Advisory Committee Meeting
150 Wakefield Street, Suite 12, Conference Rm. 1A
Rochester, NH 03867**

Meeting Minutes

**Friday, July 6th, 2018
9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.**

Initially a quorum was not present, so project updates were presented with the understanding that some committee members were on their way. The meeting was called to order with a quorum at 9:15 am.

1. Introductions

Members Present: Jim Campbell (Rochester), Kelley Collins (Wakefield) Beverly Cray (UNH), John Hotchkiss (Middleton), Scott Kinmond (New Durham), Diane Smith (Brookfield), Tracy McAllister (NHDOT), Shanna Saunders (Somersworth), Elizabeth Strachan (NHDES), Michael Williams (COAST), Gretchen Young (Dover)

Guests Present: Fallon Reed (NH Department of Homeland Security & Emergency Management)

Staff Present: Jennifer Czysz (Executive Director), Colin Lentz (Regional Transportation Planner), Stefanie Casella (Data Collection and Analysis Assistant), Monique Duchesne (Data Assistant)

2. Staff Communications

C. Lentz noted that staff had been working with J. Czysz, reviewing candidates and holding interviews for the GIS Planner position. He said the staff team was going to meet on Monday morning to review priority candidates, make a final decision, and reach out to the top candidate to make an initial offer. He said there were several qualified applicants; each with varied expertise and a unique background, so staff would be carefully considering SRPC's needs and goals for future GIS work in their final decision.

3. Action Item(s)

3.1 - Minutes from May 4th [VOTE]

A quorum was not present at the June 1st meeting, so meeting notes were presented and committee members voted on the May 4th minutes.

J. Hotchkiss made a motion to accept the May 4th minutes as written.

Seconded by D. Smith

Vote: Unanimous in favor

3.2 – Officer Elections (Chair and Vice Chair)

C. Lentz explained that the committee bylaws stipulated that officers will be elected at the first meeting after the start of the fiscal year, and the current Vice Chair will assume the role of Chair if there are no other nominations for Chair. He reminded committee members that he had been in contact with M. Laferte (Farmington) and M. Williams (COAST) – the current Chair and Vice Chair, respectively – about

this transition and both were comfortable with M. Williams becoming Chair. C. Lentz asked for nominations for the Chair and Vice Chair. J. Hotchkiss volunteered to be the Vice Chair; he was nominated by D. Smith.

J. Hotchkiss made a motion to accept the slate of candidates for Chair and Vice Chair.

J. Campbell seconded the motion

Vote: Unanimous in favor

S. Saunders made a motion to accept the nomination of M. Williams for Chair

Seconded by E. Strachan

Vote: Unanimous in favor

S. Saunders made a motion to accept the nomination of J. Hotchkiss for Vice Chair

Seconded by D. Smith

Vote: Unanimous in favor

4. – Discussion Items

Presentation: Local and Regional Emergency Response and Recovery – Fallon Reed from NH Homeland Security & Emergency Management

F. Reed explained she was the Planning Chief at the NH Department of Homeland Security & Emergency Management (HSEM). She noted that there had been five presidential disaster declarations between March of 2017 and March of 2018 – the greatest number of open and ongoing declared disasters in any 365-day period. She noted that Strafford County was only impacted by one of those disasters – the March 13th snowstorm – and HSEM is in the process of accepting and processing applications from municipalities. She explained that municipalities applying for funding for local projects and planning (through the hazard mitigation grant program) do not have to have those projects mentioned specifically in the local Hazard Mitigation Plan; they simply need to align with the goals and objectives of the plan. F. Reed specified that there are two primary hazard mitigation funding programs: 404 which supports pre-disaster planning and projects; and 406 which supports communities in recovering infrastructure after disaster events (e.g. bridge and culvert repairs and replacement).

F. Reed said HSEM had just submitted an update to the NH State Hazard Mitigation Plan to FEMA for their review. She said the state plan is updated every five years (similar to local plans) and includes updated information related to climate change impacts in the state. She said FEMA will be reviewing the draft plans and they should be available soon. She noted that the state is also working on an update to the State Emergency Operations Plan which includes a number of specific appendices (called annexes).

F. Reed provided several handouts on HSEM programs and said communities could contact her or Whitney Welch for more information. She described HSEM's three primary funding assistance programs for pre-disaster projects, planning, and mitigation efforts:

- The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) – focused on planning and projects
- The Pre-Disaster Mitigation program (PDM)
- Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA)

D. Smith asked for clarification about funding support programs related to the March 13th snowstorm for Brookfield. She asked which ones supported projects and planning and which focused on recovery and cleanup reimbursements. F. Reed responded that public assistance programs (under the FEMA section

406 program) are designed for direct cost reimbursement to municipalities (with a 75% federal 25% local match cost split). Non-recovery planning and projects are supported by the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP).

C. Lentz asked if F. Reed could provide more information about how HSEM can help communities build more resilience against future disasters (for instance, investing more now in infrastructure that is designed to withstand more damaging storms). F. Reed said most of the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program goes toward helping communities with local hazard mitigation plan updates to incorporate progressive practices, projects, and planning. She said project-specific funds came primarily through the HMGP, noting that the FEMA funding framework was focused on post-disaster recovery rather than pre-disaster resilience improvements. F. Reed explained that FEMA funds did support efforts like culvert up-sizing. She noted that acquisition of properties in flood hazard zones was common, especially in coastal areas. Individual homeowners cannot apply for funds but a municipality can apply on behalf of property-owners for demolition, property acquisition, and building relocation through FEMA. She said properties are assessed at pre-event fair market value and any properties acquired by the community have to be maintained as open greenspace.

F. Reed explained that communities looking long-term should work to align their local plans with the upcoming updated State Hazard Mitigation and Emergency Operations plans.

C. Lentz asked about examples of cost sharing across municipalities and state agencies to pay for infrastructure projects that build resilience but are more expensive than replacing or repairing infrastructure to minimum standards. F. Reed said state aid bridge funds can sometimes be used on FEMA project to cover up to 80% of the required local match, making it much more affordable for municipalities. She said HSEM is working to develop more funding support opportunities for communities in resilience and recovery building. She added that every \$1.00 invested in mitigation at the local yields an average of \$7.00 saved on recovery costs.

J. Czysz asked for clarification about deadlines for local hazard mitigation plan updates as a prerequisite for funding applications. F. Reed responded that communities can apply for funds even if their local plan is expired, as long as the plan is in the process of approval when they submit their applications.

J. Czysz asked if there were any other prerequisites municipalities should be aware of for project applications. F. Reed reiterated that projects should align with the goals and objectives of local plans and conform to the list of eligible activities listed on the HSEM website. She said she would email more information and links to C. Lentz about eligibility and prerequisites.

C. Lentz asked how HSEM is collaborating with NHDOT as they develop the State Transportation Asset Management Plan (which is a recent requirement of state DOTs under the FAST act). F. Reed said she focused on public assistance and wasn't fully aware of collaborative efforts. She said other HSEM staff worked with NHDOT and NHDOT staff worked on the updates to the State Hazard Mitigation Plan and were working with HSEM on the Emergency Operations Plan update.

5. – Project Updates

C. Lentz provided brief updates on two ongoing projects. He said staff at all New Hampshire RPCs had received training for the Road Surface Management System (RSMS) – both the assessment and forecasting phases. He said SRPC staff were working with several municipalities on RSMS efforts and said committee members and town staff should contact him with any questions about RSMS.

C. Lentz explained that SRPC had been working with NH Trout Unlimited staff about a culvert modeling and outreach effort. He said SRPC had assessed many stream crossings in the region and was working with Trout Unlimited to enter the data into a model that could help communities prioritize investments

in culvert repair and replacement. This effort is a good collaborative effort between SRPC and Trout Unlimited because their goals are complimentary (increasing infrastructure condition and local resilience, and improving stream health and connectivity).

S. Saunders asked which communities were part of the project. C. Lentz responded that New Durham, Farmington, Wakefield and Milton were included in the modeling effort and were focused on by Trout Unlimited because of their location in the Salmon Falls Watershed.

6. – Other Business

M. Williams provided updates on three major COAST programs and service changes. He explained that COAST recently implemented a system-wide retiming that was primarily designed to realign bus schedules to match the reality of current traffic levels and on-time performance. It had been many years since the bus schedule was updated and the towns and cities in COAST's service area have grown substantially in that time, necessitating a new schedule that was more reliable and predictable for riders. M. Williams said the retiming implementation was very new but was getting positive initial results.

M. Williams said Route 7 service (along NH108 between Newmarket and Exeter) had switched from a standard fixed route model to an on-demand service. This was in response to low ridership along the route and recent reduction of the route's service area (it previously also connected to Portsmouth). He said the goal was to make service in the area more cost effective and responsive to rider needs. M. Williams explained that the on-demand model would cover the same route along NH108 between Newmarket and Exeter – with an expanded service corridor – but would be available by reservation only. Riders now need to call ahead to reserve a trip (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday between 9:30am and 5:15pm). Riders can use the existing Route 7 stops, or can request to be dropped off or picked up within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of any designated stop along the route. Riders who get on and off the bus at a designated stop will still pay a \$1.50 one-way fare; riders who get on or off at a non-designated stop will pay \$3.00.

M. Williams explained that COAST would be taking over the senior transportation program in Portsmouth, NH. Starting on October 1st. The program will be providing trips for medical appointments (non-emergency), shopping, and volunteer jobs; trip reservations will be coordinated through Triplink (COAST's call center).

7. – **Citizen's Forum** – Citizens of the Strafford region are invited to speak on the subject matter of the meeting. Statements shall be limited to three minutes

No citizens brought comments forward at the meeting.

8. Adjournment

J. Hotchkiss made a motion to adjourn

Seconded by J. Campbell

Vote: Unanimous in favor

Approved by

Name Printed: Michael Williams

Signed: 

Date: 8/3/18