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Strafford Regional Planning Commission
Executive Committee Meeting

Virtual Zoom Meeting

FINAL Meeting Minutes
April 17, 2020

Committee members present: Vice Chair Peter Nelson, Newmarket; Donald Hamann, Rochester; David Landry, Dover; Barbara Holstein, Rochester; Michael Bobinsky, Somersworth; Secretary/Treasurer Tom Crosby, Madbury

Staff members present: Jen Czysz, executive director; Shayna Sylvia, communications and outreach planner;

Committee members absent: Chair Victoria Parmele, Northwood;

1. Welcome/Introductions

The meeting began at 8:07 a.m.

P. Nelson called the meeting to order. He shared that due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this Committee is authorized to hold an emergency meeting electronically. There was no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to the meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order: each member in attendance (via Zoom) confirmed their participation and name, and that they were the only one in the room (if connecting with video), or on the phone (if connecting with audio).

Those in attendance at the start of the meeting included Peter Nelson, David Landry, Michael Bobinsky, Barbara Holstein, Donald Hamann Shayna Sylvia, and Jennifer Czysz.

2. Action Items

a. Approval of the Minutes of April 3, 2020

P. Nelson asked for a motion to accept the minutes of the April 3, 2020 Executive Committee meeting. D. Hamann **MOVED** to accept the minutes. M. Bobinsky **SECONDED** the motion, of which all were **IN**

FAVOR. The motion carried via roll call vote of D. Landry, M. Bobinsky, B. Holstein, P. Nelson and D. Hamann in the affirmative.

Tom Crosby joined the meeting at 8:11 a.m.

b. Acceptance of the Draft March Financials

J. Czynsz reviewed the Draft March Financials.

J. Czynsz shared the status of the bank balances. SRPC was awaiting payments from NHDOT, but this have been resolved. She shared that finances are more closely monitored at this point in the year, as the fiscal year ends June 30. She noted that in comparison to the end of fiscal year 2019, we are in a better financial position.

She explained that declining balances at this point in the year are expected, as SRPC draws down dues payments received nearly a year ago. J. Czynsz shared she is comfortable with the status of the current financials. She added that none of the current funds are restricted, which was not the case last year.

J. Czynsz reviewed the profit and loss statement, explaining that the organization will end in a strong financial position, especially when compared with the last few years. She added that the fiscal year should end in the black. The dues applied to the budget incrementally throughout the year. To date we have not fully expended all dues for the fiscal year, contributing to the current profit.

J. Czynsz shared context for the FY 2021 budget, explaining that when you look at profit and loss budget versus actuals for FY 2020, you'll see several of the contracts (particularly NHDES and NHDOT) haven't been expended to the anticipated amount. She added that we will still be able to expend some more of these funds before June 30, and that these contracts roll over to FY 2021. She adjusted the working budget for FY 2020, and has brought it into alignment for where we project to be year end, and the balances that will be carried forward

A discussion ensued concerning rent payments for SRPC's office space during the time that the building is closed and if this should be adjusted and about potential for saving money during the COVID-19 pandemic, in general.

J. Czynsz replied that SRPC is saving money with office supplies and added that financial consultant Kathy Foster has reduced her hours due to increased business with tax season.

J. Czynsz explained that on the revenue side, the COVID-19 pandemic has not impacted us.

J. Czynsz shared that the adopted mid-year budget included potential new contracts with a net amount of \$70,000. \$40,000 will be rolling forward to 2021, and \$30,000 is a net surplus as of today. This is where we should end the fiscal year. She added that we expect the monthly profit and loss to break even over the next few months. J. Czynsz added that she has several new projects that are coming along in the next few months. She added that the organization is in a pretty good financial position, if there is no impact to dues payments. Due invoices were sent out on Tuesday of this week.

P. Nelson asked for J. Czysz to elaborate on the impacts of decreased or late dues payments, and any other unforeseen financial issues due to COVID-19. This will be covered when talking about the FY 2021 budget later on the agenda.

D. Hamann **MOVED** to accept the Draft March Financials. M. Bobinsky **SECONDED** the motion, of which all were **IN FAVOR**. The motion carried via roll call vote of D. Landry, M. Bobinsky, B. Holstein, P. Nelson and D. Hamann, and T. Crosby

3. Updates and Discussion

a. COVID-19 actions and updates

J. Czysz explained that COVID-19 hasn't influenced internal operations or the financials. She shared that the organization has been very busy with economic development technical assistance. Nancy O' Connor and James Burdin have been hosting calls with economic development staff on a weekly basis. SRPC as Strafford Economic Development District is developing different ways as a regional entity to provide support. Strafford EDD was also able to connect with Commissioner Taylor Caswell at N.H. Department of Business and Economic Affairs, and they are facilitating receipt of a listing of all business in good standing from secretary of state's office. This information is usually provided at a cost, but Strafford EDD will be receiving an export of this data. This will help EDD staff connect with the businesses within their communities.

J. Czysz shared that J. Burdin has been serving as a direct liaison between a larger seacoast group and the NH Small Business Administration (SBA), to improve municipal technical assistance. She added that Strafford EDD heard directly from Alan Brigham, our Economic Development Agency (EDA) representative, that there are stimulus funds coming to EDA and that he will be working with us to put together a proposal for a share of these funds. These funds are anticipated be less competitive or non-competitive, and it seems as if Strafford EDD has a strong chance of receiving a share of the funds in support of the COVID-19 crisis.

J. Czysz updated the committee on a web resource called Mighty Small, that was created by SRPC and a business owner in Somersworth. S. Sylvia shared this will be linked in Bits and Pieces. J. Czysz elaborated on the weekly phone calls being held, sharing that there has been regular participation from Milton, Barrington, local Chambers of Commerce, the tri-cities, SBA staff, Exeter, and Portsmouth. A discussion ensued on the outcome of these phone calls.

B. Holstein commended the work of J. Burdin and the other EDD staffers. She commented on continuing these efforts and connections outside of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was suggested that more outreach be done to inform municipalities and businesses of resources like Mighty Small.

J. Czysz explained that most of the hours billed to the EDA grant in the last several weeks were for technical assistance related to COVID-19. EDA confirmed that this was proper procedure to deal with the crisis before other contractual items, like the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs).

J. Czynsz updated committee members on funding available through the TUFTS Health Grant, that is in addition to the funding that SRPC already applied for. The organization is able to adapt our current TUFTS Health grant proposal to incorporate responses to COVID –19.

M. Bobinsky shared that he appreciates the social media statistic tracking on the monthly dashboard.

b. Awards, Contracts, and General Business Update

A discussion ensued about notarized documents during COVID-19. B. Holstein is a notary.

c. FY 2021 Draft Budget

J. Czynsz shared her draft FY 2021 budget, explaining that her calculation of expenses is on the high end.

She commented on the amount of funds being carried over from FY 2020, explaining the SRPC deliberately delayed the start of some projects to have the bulk of funds available in 2021. She stated that SRPC has hired a consultant to assist with a resilience project in Dover. The project the consultant will be working on is slated to begin in May.

J. Czynsz discussed the difficulties with beginning the summer field work program, due to COVID-19.

J. Czynsz explained certain items on the draft budget, sharing which items were in place, and which funding sources were awaiting confirmation, like the TUFTS Health Grant and funding from NH Children's Health Foundation.

She reiterated that no funding sources have been impacted by the Stay at Home order, not even circuit riding contracts.

J. Czynsz shared the expense portion of the draft budget is more conservative. She explained the biggest changes, adding that if we have a surplus of additional contracts we are going to need to hire. She added that Stephen Geis, currently an intern, was recently offered a full-time position. He will be helping with the traffic counts, processing data for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and CEDS, and is our second GIS staffer in the office.

J. Czynsz said that a new temporary staff member would hypothetically begin in September. She stated that we plan to hire two summer interns.

She reviewed different hiring scenarios and their effects on the budget.

J. Czynsz reviewed her plans for current staff salary increases and health care options. She went into detail about the health insurance changes and how this added to expenses in the budget, explaining that to be implemented changes would have to be made to the employee handbook.

M. Bobinsky shared that he appreciated J. Czynsz's budget options showing best- and worst-case scenarios.

A discussion ensued about the health care plan options.

J. Czynsz reminded members that we normally adopt the budget at the June annual meeting.

It was decided that a final decision would be made at the next E.C. meeting, along with the recommendation of the FY 2021 budget to the full commission.

J. Czynsz elaborated on her plans for salary increases and moving this to a pay scale schedule. E.C. members suggested that J. Czynsz modify the base salary adjustment to a lower percentage.

D. Landry asked about tax caps and town budgets, and if J. Czynsz is concerned about receipt of dues. The organization can only wait and see what happens considering COVID-19.

P. Nelson suggested better marketing our services. This is being done as SRPC plans its new website. The goal of having 100% of members pay dues was discussed.

J. Czynsz shared that for the next meeting she would make some revisions to budget to tighten salaries line, using a lower cost of living increase as a base, find out about temporary employee expenses and health insurance eligibility, confirm staff participation, and will monitor dues responses. She added that she would also look into editing the employee handbook, using Nashua RPC's as a model. D. Hamann liked NRPC wording. D. Landry agreed. Discussion ensued. Updates on this to E.C. will be included in memo for next meeting.

d. April Monthly Minors

J. Czynsz shared that there was a relevant project in Dover, and that senior transportation planner Colin Lentz spoke with Dover. They concur with the minors

For the statewide projects, there were no child projects in the region.

4. Other Business

S. Sylvia gave a brief update from annual meeting survey. The topic of most interest was resiliency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. Adjourn

M. Bobinsky **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. T. Crosby **SECONDED** the motion, of which all were **IN FAVOR**. The motion carried via roll call vote of D. Landry, M. Bobinsky, B. Holstein, P. Nelson and D. Hamann, and T. Crosby

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by
Shayna Sylvia
Communications and Outreach Planner