

STRAFFORD

Regional Planning Commission

Strafford Regional Planning Commission
Executive Committee Meeting
150 Wakefield Street, Conference Room 1A
Rochester, NH 03867
June 17, 2022
Final Meeting Minutes

1) Welcome/Introductions

D. Landry called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. and asked for introductions.

Committee members present: Bill Fisher, Farmington; Barbara Holstein, Rochester; Dave Landry, Dover; Peter Nelson, Newmarket (virtual); Donald Hamann, Rochester; Tom Crosby, Madbury; Michael Bobinsky, Somersworth

Staff members present: Jen Czysz, Executive Director

Staff attending remotely: Kyle Pimental, Principal Regional Planner

2) Action Items

a. Approval of the May 20, 2022, Meeting Minutes

B. Fisher MOTIONED to approve the Minutes of May 20, 2022, as written. A SECOND by D. Hamann. ALL IN FAVOR. Motion passed with a unanimous vote in favor.

b. Acceptance of Draft May Financials

J. Czysz summarized the draft May Financials reporting that they are holding steady and have been consistent month to month. Bank accounts remain healthy and stable. Saving and checking have more in them at this point compared to last year due to balances on the books for those contracts that we bill in advance (e.g., EDA and Tufts Foundation).

Invoices for dues were also sent out in May, which is later than in years past which points to a healthy account balance where the planning commission has not been as reliant on funding from dues. Balance of Aging Summary is significantly higher because of the dues invoices being sent out in May. Dues are owed by July 1, 2022, with some already been received, but there are quite a few that remain on the Aging Summary in the current month balance. There is a past due balance of \$22,150, which is mostly projects that are being timely processed (e.g., reimbursement for grant administration for the Gaffney Home – CDBG).

The profit and loss report shows that May had a small loss of about \$5,000 because of some projects being billed on a task basis or holding until substantial work has been accomplished and bill multiple months together. Those revenues will show up in June.

Year to date net profit is running at almost \$21,000. The goal is to zero out and not show a significant profit, which indicates that the indirect rate is set too high to where the planning commission is operating. Anticipated that several invoices will come in at the end of June (e.g., IT budget).

P. Nelson asked about the \$12,000 equipment line item on the May Balance Sheet. J. Czysz said it was likely a carryover but will ask Kathy and verify as to what that was referring to. P. Nelson also asked about the server and whether SPRC was considering moving to cloud-based storage. J. Czysz said yes and is budgeted for FY2023.

M. Bobinsky asked about the Aging Summary balance to clarify that the past due balance was outside of the municipal dues. J. Czysz responded by saying those items are detailed on page three of the Aging Summary and as of May 31st were still due but may have come in between May 31st and today (June 17th).

M. Bobinsky MOTIONED to accept the May Draft Financials as presented. A SECOND by T. Crosby. The members voted ALL IN FAVOR. Motion passed with a unanimous vote in favor.

c. Recommend Adoption of the FY2023 Budget

J. Czysz summarized the budget and the minor changes that have been made, including when it is expected that projects will end and the hiring and what is needed for staffing next fiscal year.

D. Landry asked for a high-level explanation on the contracted work and revenue side of the state agency numbers.

Starting with the contracted work, J. Czysz stated that several outsourced contracted projects will end in June. There are two significant drivers. The first is the brownfields program where there is only three months left and ends in September. We were not awarded a new contract for this upcoming fiscal year but will be reapplying in the fall. That money is being spent down in a strategic way to set SRPC up for the next grant application cycle. The cause of the significant increase is the HUD economic development initiatives congressionally designated spending, which is earmarked funding for all nine regional planning commissions that was awarded to work on our regional plans and to integrate work from the regional housing needs assessments into the regional plans. SRPC has volunteered to be the lead applicant on behalf of all the regional planning commissions. Under the grant there is \$100,000 for each regional planning commission, plus an additional \$50,000 for grant administration. This accounts for a large portion of the funding that is going to be sub-awarded to the other regional planning commissions.

Regarding the state contracts, those successful grant applications and projects are coming to end at the end of the fiscal year. This led to the hiring of Alaina and other staff. There are additional funding opportunities to explore in the coming months. There will be a small lull, but because of the federal funding through the HUD project and more on the MPO side, it will offset the state contract and there should not be any issues. This fiscal year the money is coming from different sources. The net change on the revenue side is almost \$240,000.

T. Crosby MOTIONED to recommend the Draft FY2023 Budget be adopted by the full commission. A. SECOND by D. Hamann. ALL IN FAVOR. Motion passed with a unanimous vote in favor.

d. Approval of the FY2023 Billing Rates & Salary Ranges

J. Czysz summarized billing rates and salary ranges and compared to last year's ranges. Billing rate levels bump up \$5 per category, except for the interns, which increased \$2. There were small incremental shifts to the salary ranges. Everything in the budget fits within the salary ranges.

D. Landry asked whether the \$5 difference between dues paying and non-dues paying communities has any impact on internal costs such as staff preparation or is it more of a tool to incentivize participation in dues. J. Czysz said there is no additional effort on staff. The increase is trying to capture the non-dues communities and recover those costs in some way so they can be used to leverage other grants and funding sources.

D. Hamann asked how many communities currently don't pay dues. J. Czysz responded by saying there are only two communities that do not pay dues – it used to be four. Lee and Milton joined back to paying dues as of January 1st. Nottingham Planning Board put forward a recommendation that dues be placed in the budget to the Board of Selectmen, but it did not. Brookfield is the other. SRPC has made good progress and improvement in reducing the amount of non-dues communities in recent years.

D. Hamann MOTIONED to approve the FY2023 Billing Rates & Salary Ranges. A SECOND by M. Bobinsky. ALL IN FAVOR. Motion passed with a unanimous vote in favor.

e. Recommend Slate of Officers for Approval

Members discussed filling the two alternate spots.

D. Hamann mentioned that Joe Boudreau was considering in participating. This would potentially result in three representatives from Rochester. J. Czysz mentioned that we would want to ensure we have a healthy mix of representation from both the towns and cities. Members agreed that so long as there are no legal restrictions, SRPC should reach out to Joe to determine his interest level as an alternate, which has a lower level of responsibility and would be only needed to achieve a quorum of four. J. Czysz suggested Katrin from Lee as another potential candidate to fill the last alternate spot.

D. Hamann asked about current term ending 6/30/21. He was accepted and appointed by the City recently. As a result, his term may need to be adjusted. T. Crosby stated that he will serve an additional term after 9/1/2022. SRPC will update commission terms to account for newly appointed members.

D. Hamann MOTIONED to recommend Slate of Officers for Approval to full policy commission subject to being updated with the most recent commission terms. A SECOND by T. Crosby. ALL IN FAVOR. Motion passed with a unanimous vote in favor.

P. Nelson recommended investing in a better sound system. When the conversation goes around the table, it is often difficult to hear people.

f. Approval of the Employee Handbook

J. Czysz updated members on several questions that were discussed in previous meetings.

The first edit was regarding weapons in personal vehicles parked on commission property. The attorney at Primex provided a summary that stated that RSA 159:26 reserved the right of regulating firearms to the state, which means no other governmental entity can regulate firearms. Therefore, as a political subdivision of the state, the planning commission cannot regulate firearms; however, as an employer there is a responsibility to ensure safety for employees. It has yet to be litigated, but if the organization chooses to limit just to employees while working, it

seems to be generally legally safe. As such, the attorney added “while on duty/during work hours” to the clause of firearm limitation.

The second edit was requested by members at last month’s meeting that will require that the Executive Director is responsible for apprising the Executive Committee (EC) on such incidents that involve any direct threats or acts of violence or suspicious activities. In the event the offender is the executive director, or is unavailable, staff will bring such incidents forward.

M. Bobinsky asked how this came up. J. Czysz responded that a specific review of the document was undertaken from Primex regarding liability insurance and then sent to an H/R firm for a full review. The topic of weapons came up during discussion with the EC. In addition, there were three policies that were recommended to be eliminated, including flex time, the non-FML policy, and appeals for situations of termination or employee discipline, because they are not legally required. The predominant concern was the flex time as it gives the appearance that employees should be non-exempt hourly employees subject to overtime and are skirting the overtime rules. There were not major concerns with the other two policies (FML and appeals).

g. Approval of the Wellness and Safety Plan

J. Czysz provided a brief overview on the plan. There were no comments received from EC members. Several changes included recommendations that came out of the Joint Loss Committee, including what to do during a fire emergency and emergency action procedures. Some of the procedures that were identified in both the employee handbook and the employee health and wellness plan were consolidated to reduce redundancies and maintain consistency between the two documents.

M. Bobinsky MOTIONED to approve the Wellness and Safety Plan. A SECOND by D. Hamann. ALL IN FAVOR. Motion passed with a unanimous vote in favor

3) Updates and Discussion Items

a. Awards, Contracts, and General Business

J. Czysz reported several project kickoffs, including the New Durham Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) ordinance update, the Barrington Master Plan, and the Strafford Master Plan. Next month there will be a larger discussion on several upcoming grant applications.

Indirect rate holding constant at 105%-107% range. The current approved rate is 117%.

Municipal dues have resulted in a healthy balance, which will allow the planning commission to put away at end of fiscal year.

D. Landry asked a question about dues accounting. J. Czysz responded on how those dues are accounted for and entered into the revenue line on an accrual basis.

P. Nelson asked whether it would make sense to share results of ADU process with other member towns, stating this would be useful information to pass along. K. Pimental provided his thoughts and experience with Farmington and on the potential benefits to sharing updates and engaging with member communities. Other EC members agreed. J. Czysz mentioned that Mark has already started creating a matrix looking at different community regulations.

b. June Monthly Minors

C. Lentz reviewed the minor transportation project modifications for June. They included: the statewide transportation improvements program projects for an increase in federal and local PE funds for child project (no child projects in the region are affected); a bridge on Route 4 in Barrington; signal optimization on High Street in Somersworth; and recreation trail program tracking (no projects in our region).

Members concurred with the minors as proposed.

4) Other Business

D. Hamann suggested that SRPC explore transitions to .GOV domain. There is a strict process to transition but will allow for additional cyber security. Rochester and Somersworth are both considering making this transition. SRPC will follow up.

5) Adjourn

MOTIONED to adjourn by M. Bobinsky. SECONDED by D. Hamann. The members voted unanimously in favor to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 9:04a.m.