



Connecticut River Joint Commissions

Steering Committee minutes

August 13, 2010

Alumni Hall Cultural and Interpretive Center

Haverhill, NH

1:00 pm

Present: George Watkins, Tom Kennedy, Robert Christie, Peter Gregory, John Severence, Norm Wright, Glenn English (all members present)

Commissioners present: Cheston Newbold, Gayle Ottmann, Gary Moore, Nat Tripp, Mary Sloat, Bren Whittaker.

Guests: David Deen, Bernie Folta

Glenn English opened the meeting at 1:10 PM. He introduced Keisha Luce, Executive Director of Alumni Hall who gave a brief summary of Hall activities and answered some questions. Good turnout for events this season. Coming signage will really help with visitors.

The April minutes of Steering Committee. Motion to approve by Tom Kennedy, seconded by Peter Gregory and all approved.

The July 21st minutes of Steering Committee. Motion to approve by George Watkins, seconded by Tom Kennedy and all approved.

Personnel Committee: There are two current members, Cheston Newbold and Gayle Ottmann. A third is needed. Gayle reported that she is attempting to

recruit Janet Rebman. Glenn stated that this would be a Steering Committee appointment. Steering Committee was in favor of pursuing Janet for this position.

Finance Committee: There are four members, George Watkins, Treasurer, Tom Kennedy, Norm Wright, and Glenn English. Glenn said we need at least 3 members and not more than 5. He said he is stepping down. He is comfortable with 3 members but asked if anyone would like to serve. Tom said Norm's personal situation may prevent him from attending many meetings. Glenn said the appointments to Finance have to be made by the CRJC. He suggested we make a recommendation for the CRJC meeting in September. Tom said he would contact Cleve Kapala to see if he was interested. All agreed.

Financial update: Peter referred to the AR and AP summaries.

Accounts Receivable: NHDOT will send us all the money billed (\$31,000) which should be in checking account next week. Glenn thanked Peter for his work in this area. This is great news. We should now have about \$46,000 in receivables. Also just got payment from Vermont A & R (\$3,800) final retainage on last year's contract. There are a few other minor receivables. Peter said we have now billed everybody we can year to date. Any future billings will be for ongoing work, ie. Colebrook, Ammonoosuc. **Accounts Payable:** We've paid second installment to NHCF (\$16,000) so we owe them about \$31,850. The final two payments are due Sept 30th and Oct. 30th. We have cut a check for Craftsman Industries half of what we owe them (\$42,000). They wanted a partial payment. We are holding check until receipt of NHDOT money. Our payables at this point are down to \$72,000. We have roughly \$7,500 in cash so that's \$53,000 in cash and \$72,000 in bills. We've been maintaining that \$20,000 gap. We will still have \$20,000 gap even with the NHDOT money. Tom asked about working on the \$20,000 gap. Peter said V-Trans has about \$13,000 in an old By-way grant if Theresa can provide some support for the By-way. That's a way to recover some of her time and indirect cost. Glenn said we are not out of the woods yet and don't have a long-term survival strategy yet. Peter was unsure about the Colebrook and Ammonoosuc projects, whether there were some

additional billings possible to NHDES. He is working on that now. We were so far behind on our billing that we were apparently using the NHCF money for everything. There could be some cash coming, still don't know. Glenn reported on his visit to the office. A lot of material in the office can be stored. Theresa had stated that she could work from home. Not that many walk-ins to the office. Tom has spoken to his executive committee and his organization would be willing to provide free office space and use of photocopiers and phones. This would be a place where Theresa could continue to work for the CRJC. George asked about the lease at Charlestown office. Glenn said it is month to month with no long-term commitment. There is a photocopy lease. Glenn said we are paying about 1 cent per copy. There is also a Pitney Bowes postage machine with a restrictive lease. Tom said he was sensitive about some criticism that this was an RPC takeover of the CRJC so he wants to make it clear that he is just offering space, not managing the Organization. Glenn stated that as far as he was concerned several RPC's actually saved this organization. We all owe Peter and Tom our thanks and also North Country Council and Upper Valley. Mary said it would be important to maintain the office phone number. Glenn said Theresa's working files are two four drawer cabinets and her work station. Her space needs are not huge. Cheston stated we have three options; stay where we are, accept Tom's offer or let Theresa work from home. Cheston felt, and George agreed, that Theresa wanted to stay close to home if possible and we have an investment in her. Glenn agreed that this was a factor but we have to think about survival of the Organization. Peter thought our office expenses ran about \$1,000 per month plus the office rental of \$500. We could conceivably save \$1,500 a month with a move. Glenn thought that was about what payroll was running. Also Bob Harcke had offered storage capacity. Peter said we really need to go through the office materials. Bob asked about office equipment at Theresa's home. Glenn said we could relocate it there if she had room. Mary said she wants to be near her children. Glenn said we do have some options and a little bit of time. He would like to discuss this at the next CRJC meeting. Glenn asked Tom to put his offer in writing. Norm and Gary urged that a plan be fleshed out and that Glenn further discuss with Theresa.

Peter said in the past CRJC has gotten \$4,000 from NHDES to underwrite some costs to provide support to the local river subcommittees. The money is much more project centered and we can't meet the application deadline and won't pursue that money this year. We could compete again in 2012. This revenue source was built into the budget. Tom is working on the Vermont State grant. It can be used for match other grants, local subcommittee support, Theresa's time. The NH State money is all reimbursement starting in October. Glenn said we could get 25% up front then ¼ ly payments. The Vermont money is monthly based on reimbursement, nothing up front. Glenn is handling the NH side. He said we really should be funded through NHDES, not OEP. Glenn said he is worried about the NH State appropriation next year so he urged NH Commissioners to be ready to do battle. The NH amount is \$30,000 and Vermont is \$34,000. Glenn stated that without that money and State support he would not continue to serve on the Commission in the future. Norm stated he thought the support was where it should be. We will have to step up and make some relationships with a whole new set of people. Tom suggested we put a cap on Larry Reed's services. Glenn felt that Theresa was giving us the reports we need. Cash flow is pretty easy to follow now. Norm said we have separated accounting and auditing services and Theresa's work seems to be adequate. Peter said Larry feels Theresa is up to speed and Larry is expecting a reduced role for himself. Larry's cost was discussed. Bob said this is a good time for the Commissions to start from scratch and develop an ideal budget of what it actually takes to run this Organization. We need those figures. Glenn added that our cash flow problems have not gone away. We don't have sustainability money other than the State appropriations. Norm agreed that we need to go back and look at why and how we were chartered and what our mission statement should be. We have grown in a topsy-turvy way, where there was money. Following the money. What is it that we are and should be? Glenn said that Bob Christie and others are looking at the By-laws and looking at mission and structure. Our current By-laws are primarily administrative, they don't deal with what we do but rather how we do it. Norm said that was important. Peter said we are doing about \$1,500 per month with Larry to support Theresa. Tom suggested we limit Larry's hours to 10 per month, more with permission. All agreed by consensus. George suggested

we ask Theresa first. Glenn said he has talked to Theresa and Larry in the office and he felt it would work OK. Bernie Folta had a question. Glenn asked him to wait till the public comment time. Motion by Peter to clean up the office support payments totaling about \$2,000 and pay other project payments as needed (Colebrook, Ammonoosuc and Sign grant). We need to keep up with our obligations. As we invoice these agencies and get the money we then pay the bills that are the basis of the requisitions, seconded by John Severence, there was some further discussion and all approved. Tom said that Sen. Sanders has been successful at moving the bill forward for the Conn River watershed. The CRJC could receive \$10 million over a 10 year period. Sadder news is that there is a 50% match, which could be in-kind. He said there are concerns in Washington as to whether we will survive. We need to make every effort to survive because the CRJC is named in the legislation. Glenn noted that this is authorizing legislation, not an appropriation. Bren said he spoke to Sen. Leahy as an individual and he said he was supportive and thought this could come to a vote before the end of the year. Bren didn't feel that Sen. Leahy had concerns about our survival. Norm said we are a creature of government and it was the legislatures of both states who made us and the Governors and legislatures of both states need to step up and sustain us. Congress will listen closer to a commitment of the two States. Glenn said that's the match, the 50% match has to be the State money. Bob stated the River is here, it was a mess before the Commissions got involved and somebody has to look after it. An American Heritage River. It's got some status. He didn't see how the States could walk away from it. Glenn said they can if they don't hear noise. The bottom line is that this is a political fight and if they don't hear noise they will not do it.

LOAN – a possible loan from NHCF was floated before. Tom said it was an offer made to us in Concord and someone should follow up. They did mention security. Which we really don't have. Glenn thought a line of credit would be great, to access as we need it. Glenn asked Peter to follow up. All agreed to authorize Peter to follow up. Glenn said he would e-mail Katie at NHCF.

LOCAL RIVER SUBCOMMITTEES

Background info provided by Adair Mulligan was passed out. Glenn asked for ideas on services we need to provide the LRS. The main thing Adair did was to organize and staff the meetings, do the minutes, and follow up with actions.

There has been some commissioner participation. We have 5 subcommittees. Glenn reviewed commissioners who were sort of assigned to each one.

Headwaters: Mary Sloat, Bren Whittaker; Riverbend: John Severence, Nat Tripp; Upper Valley: Gayle Ottmann, Janet Rebman; Mt. Ascutney: Tom Kennedy,

Cheston Newbold Decided to consider staying with current assignments adding Susan McMahon to Wantastiquet with Bev Major. Bob asked about connection

of subcommittees to the CRJC. Glenn said it will be commissioner support short term. Mary said individual project review is important. Glenn said project

review needs to go back to each Chair and the commissioners assigned. We need to find a free place to meet in Riverbend area, maybe the Rocks. Glenn asked

Mary, Nat and John to come up with a revised work plan for LRS by next CRJC meeting. Other ideas were discussed. Bob asked about Theresa's capabilities

and time. Glenn said she is authorized to work 25 hours per week. Nat said that if everything is transmitted to Theresa electronically she can distribute. David

Deen noted that he felt that the Local River Subcommittees were the absolute top priority of the Watershed Council. That's the place to commit CRJC's resources.

All agreed. Bren suggested we communicate with Subcommittee Chairs. Glenn said he would invite the Subcommittee chairs and members to next CRJC

meeting. Mary suggested that the Chair and Vice Chairs of the Subcommittees meet once a year. Peter agreed.

NH State Funding – already discussed but Glenn said he would like to explore changing departments in State government. Peter suggested that be pursued this fall prior to legislation. Norm thought in Vermont it would be by executive order. In NH legislative changes may be required. Glenn thought we could try Bob Odell as a sponsor.

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FOR BY-WAY COUNCIL - This would be primarily reimbursable administrative support by Theresa. We need a proposal from the By-way Council. Cheston said this could increase her time but would be paid for. Nat said there may not be a lot of work other than arranging meetings, taking notes sending minutes. The Council has been doing that on their own. They really need to get a newsletter out and web site maintenance. Gayle agreed. Glenn said a consultant could be retained. Nat said Adair was willing to do this and it would be easy. Peter said the CRJC needs to access those funds and use our existing staff person so we could underwrite some of her salary; we are also able to gather indirect. To the extent we could do that it would be a win for both organizations. A consultant would be an in and out and wouldn't really help CRJC. Nat felt Adair would be helpful with other consulting as well. Cheston asked if Theresa's time for the By-way Council would be outside her 25 hours. Peter said not necessarily. If she is able to fit it in great. Glenn said that there is money on the table and if we can use it to the benefit of both entities that would be great. There is \$13,000 available. If Theresa can do some work and there is money for consultants that's OK too. Glenn asked Nat if this could be discussed at the next By-way Council meeting and a proposal be ready to present to CRJC at the Sept. meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS: Cheston is working on new NH commissioners.

David Deen has been in touch with federal reps about Clean Water Restoration Act and the Long Island Sound Stewardship Act to put some money behind TMJL. The federal reps advised that it isn't going to happen this year. Going back to previous discussion he doesn't feel the federal money is coming any time soon. Please ask the Watershed Council for help. We will help.

Tom said we should discuss a retirement and thank you for Sharon. Tom has made some calls to get participation from a congressman. He wasn't sure that it was appropriate now. Cheston said when Sharon comes back from Sweden he would talk to her. Glenn asked Cheston to bring it to the CRJC meeting or to him.

Bernie Folta said that public expectations about public bodies are changing. Claremont and Lebanon city councils allow public comment during each agenda item. Possibly in this area political-social change is slower. He wondered how Selectboard's do it. Bernie suggested a campaign to have public memberships and an association created.

Tom moved to adjourn, Peter seconded and all approved.

Meeting adjourned at 3:20 pm.

Minutes transcribed by Glenn English