



## Connecticut River Joint Commissions

*Suite 225, 10 Water Street, Lebanon, NH 03766*

*Wednesday, December 16, 2019 ~ 1:00 – 4:00 PM*

### Minutes

#### **Present:**

**NH** – Lionel Chute, Jim McClammer, Jennifer Griffin, Jim Kennedy, Edwin Smith, Alex Belenz. **VT** – Marie Caduto, Tara Bamford, Steven Lembke, Jessica Richter, Jason Rasmussen, Chris Company. **Staff:** Olivia Ouyizeye, Pat Crocker

**Guest Speaker: Tom Sexton** – Rails-to-Trails Conservancy explained the organization and vision to connect the trail network off roads and highways throughout northern New England. There are 60 miles along the Connecticut River on the Vermont side that might work, but significant parts of it are on major roadways. The New Hampshire side seems a little more bike friendly than the Vermont side and could present an alternative. There might be some areas where additional signage was possible or making some of the on-road portions safer. The thought was to talk with CRJC to lend non-financial support of the initiative via a letter and Tom Sexton would take it from there. The most organic area in the country is New England. Its identity lends itself to having a regional network, its New England.

Comm. Smith suggested that there is an excellent snowmobile trail network in New Hampshire that runs all the way to Canada that be considered. However, Sexton explained snow mobile and ATV trails with loose soils can sometimes present a challenge, but some portions are workable. NH has acquired new trail along the coast that will lend itself to bicycling. Comm. Bamford stated that the trail along the Ammonoosuc River is impassable due to large rocks.

Comm. Lembke urged anyone who is a cyclist might be interested in helping. Comm. Lembke asked whether the CRJC would be willing to lend its name to support this concept. Company and Rasmussen moved and second support for the initiative with the note that once it has been finalized, they will get back to CRJC with plans. Vote: Unanimous

**Minutes:** Comm. Company moved and Comm. Rasmussen seconded to adopt minutes as presented. vote Vote: Unanimous

**Financials:** Comm. Griffin moved to accept the financials, Comm. Smith seconded. Comm. Griffin spoke to the \$54 assigned to Cost of Goods and explained how it is displayed on the statement versus the budget. Vote: Unanimous

**MEF Representative:** Chris Company motioned primary and secondary reps are Rick Walling and Jim Kennedy. Jason Rasmussen seconded the motion. Vote Unanimous. Local River Subcommittee Reports – Olivia Ouyizeye : Provided an update on the permitting status projects on the NH side. She noted Marie Caduto was visiting committees on the basin plans.

New Members Matt Maki – Claremont and Bill Malcolm – Lyme. Comm. Smith moved and Comm. Richter seconded a motion to accept the new members.

**Update on the NHCF Grant** – Proposal was changed to update the application and has been approved with a timeline through June 30, 2020.

**Follow up on CSB Grant** – Comm. Belenz offered three new proposals for use of these funds. (See attached outline document.) The final proposal might require reprogramming of the funding. Comm. Belenz suggested a work group to flesh out a proposal.

**FERC Relicensing** – Comm. Griffin printed out the schedule from the FERC website explaining the schedule. The actual dates are not available as the process is not entirely predictable and may be revised again.

**Gilman Hydro Dam** – Gilman, VT and Dalton, NH. Public expressed concern about fishing access and recreation in that region. Comm. Belenz will review the material and update CRJC. The review includes a request for a traditional application. The CRC comments may be posted on FirstLight website.

**Basin Planning** – Comm. Caduto spoke about the basin planning initiative. She provided the material on the Deerfield and Lower Connecticut River Tactical Basin Plan. The plan is aspirational in this series of plans? These are less so. There are specific plans for each of the basins. The implementation table at the end of the report is useful in identifying projects and in which you can find sources to fund them. Comm. McClammer was impressed by the docket but documentation from the states but lacked the sources of information. Comm. Caduto asked for written comments about

adding the citations and about shoreland protection. Comm. McClammer will make comments as an individual.

### **Tabled Transportation, Bio Mass and Road Salt until after Strategic Planning Update**

**Strategic Planning** – Emily Davis distributed and outline of the plan and went through the process for the Commissioners. After roughly 3 weeks of 25 interviews to date she is gaining excellent information and insight. Interviews are taking longer than expected, but this is a good sign that people are very engaged and have a significant interest in this process. The interviews include quantified elements ranking 1–5 include impact in the local communities and anecdotal personal information. Each of the interviews she has explained the statutory mission so that participants can respond in context of that definition. The compilation of and sharing data will be delivered to approximately mid–February. Comm. Smith expressed the view that the interview was very helpful.

Framing the importance of the strategic plan has been part of the interviews. Not all the members of the LRS are aligned with the mission of the CRJC. (See summary document). She was very impressed by the level of passion and commitment by the people involved in the analysis.

Some of the feedback may not be far beyond what is already known. There seemed to be some confusion on the structure of the organization. The strategic plan could be guided by the bylaws. The planning process should be investigatory. Too much information may be leading to conclusions.

Comm. Campany inquired whether anything had come up about the VT Clean Water Initiative in Vermont and how much has changed since the past work of the CRJC now in light of that new initiative? None were noted.

The CRJC has valuable strategic assets compared to some new organizations. Quasi–government agencies have been lulled into silence and become somewhat of a flat tire. There is no individual identification attached to any of the interviews. There are things coming up that don't seem to have a structural grounding. Comm. Chute found the report to be encouraging.

December 16 was the first meeting with Emily Davis. Additional meetings will be open to Commissioners.

The February 18 meeting is the only meeting that is not on the schedule and would have to be warned to the full Commission. Exec Board will meet to review the progress reports and plan draft between meetings. These will be open to anyone that wishes to attend. Staff will have to check time availability for the additional meeting time and work related to the strategic plan. Some separate funding will be available for staff time for this project. The final draft plan would be presented at the March 16 meeting of the Joint Commissions.

**Transportation and Climate Initiative** – Discussion of the initiative followed. Whatever the proposal is, the individual states will have to work out how the participation will be enacted either at the executive or legislative level. The issue is how to address these issues in rural communities. This is not a carbon tax, but may not be significant enough to change behavior. Systems to manage waste will also be needed to facilitate compact settlements as well as EVs.

**Bio-Mass Heating** –Windham Regional Commissions is working on local fuel supplies and local production to make it worthwhile economically.

**Road Salt** – Comm. Chute went to the North American Lakes Association meeting. Road salt is pervasive long past its initial application. The most effective way to reduce its effects is to reduce use. Some thought that this encourages growth of the phosphorus which leads to blue green algae that produces neuro-toxins. Other techniques to reduce it have to be found. New methods include pre-treating wood chips with sodium chloride has been proposed as a possible alternative. They do need a different spreader. The biggest need is education so that the municipalities can establish. The accumulation of these causes the greater impact overall.

#### **Upcoming Meetings and Conferences** –

- March 20, 2–19 NH Watershed Conference Presentations due January 15. There will be a presentation on VT's Sample Palooza that CRC will present.
- January 16 Windham Region Broad Band kickoff. Snow day is January 23.
- Paddlers Trail is Source-to-Sea Partner along the Connecticut River. Transferring Funds to CRC. CRJC is a partner and Jason Rasmussen was a representative to

this group for the CRJC. They are developing a new app for travelers' mobile use.

**Adjourn:** Comm. Belenz moved to adjourn at 4:00 p.m. Comm. Kennedy seconded the motion. Vote: Unanimous.

**Adopted: February 24, 2020**