



# MINUTES

## Connecticut River Joint Commissions

*Virtual Meeting – Zoom*

*Monday, January 25, 2021 ~ 2:00 – 4:00 PM*

Virtual meeting requirement review: The President of the Connecticut River Joint Commissions has found that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID – 19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor’s Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020–04, the CRJC and its Committees are authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting which was authorized pursuant to the Governor’s Emergency Order. The CRJC is utilizing Zoom for this electronic meeting. All members of the Commissions have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting as follows:

**Topic: CRJC Joint Commissions Meeting**

**Time: Jan 25, 2021 02:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)**

An audio recording of this meeting is available on line:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Lf\\_yHxhaUAfbue1uFLoUPqhxhDIUWPEqX/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Lf_yHxhaUAfbue1uFLoUPqhxhDIUWPEqX/view?usp=sharing)

# MINUTES

## Connecticut River Joint Commissions

*Virtual Meeting - Zoom*

*Monday, January 25, 2021 ~ 2:00 - 4:00 PM*

**Present:** VT Commissioners – Kennett, Lembke, Fellows, Bamford, Caduto, Company. NH Commissioners – Chute, Griffin, Hastings, McClammer. LRS Member Rob Christie, and Staff Pat Crocker.

2:00 PM Convene

**Adopt Minutes of September 21, 2020** – Comm. Lembke moved to adopt the minutes with the deletion of a repeated sentence. Comm. Caduto seconded the motion. Comm. Lembke requested that follow up on previous meeting minutes be added as a regular agenda item again. Comm. Lembke noted that there items such as involvement of the Local River Subcommittees; edits to Bylaws; Tracie Sales having invited DES involvement in migration project; all required follow up reports. **Comm. Lembke volunteered to take the lead on meeting follow up in the future. Vote: Unanimous.**

**Financial Report – December 31, 2020 –**

- Charitable Foundation – Grant Acceptance
  - CRJC Budget Amendment

Jen Griffin noted that the legal and accounting was complete and paid for in December, but it appears that the check was not cashed until January. Staff spend down was at about 58%. Question arose about status of the payment. Comm. Griffin moved to accept the financials as presented and to amend the budget to include the \$5,000 from the NH Charitable Foundation water quality monitoring grant and Comm. Hastings seconded the motion. **Olivia Uyizezey will be the lead person for the grant.** Comm. Chute noted the budget presented for the project funded by the NHCF grant. **Vote: Unanimous.**

**Document Retention Policy** – Staff explained that the document retention policy related primarily to financial documents and presented a CPA recommended

document destruction policy. Comm. Chute noted this was entirely appropriate. Comm. Bamford noted this separate policy required a vote. Comm. Bamford inquired whether these were consistent with state requirements. Staff indicated that it was. Comm. Kennett moved to adopt the policy and Comm. Griffin seconded it. Vote: Unanimous.

**Local River Subcommittee Update** – Attached. A written report was adopted. Comm. Lembke inquired about nomination to the UVLRS. The report included suggestions for statewide meetings on topics about the Connecticut River. Staff reported that the formal form from the Orford Selectboard form was not yet available. **Comm. Bamford moved to conditionally approve the nomination of Ted Cooley to the UVLRS pending written confirmation from the town since the CRJC meetings are less frequent.** Comm. Lembke seconded the motion. **Vote: Unanimous.**

Discussion followed on whether the resignation of Jim Kennedy from the UVLRS also included the CRVRC and his role as a CRJC Commissioner. Comm. McClammer noted Comm. Kennedy had resigned as he will become Chair of the Hanover Conservation Commission. Based on conversations with Comms. Bamford and Chute the understanding was that he had resigned from both roles. **Staff will request that Comm. Kennedy write to the CRVRC to officially resign.** Discussion followed on commissioner status and recruitment. Comm. McClammer noted that although he had stepped away from serving in an NH officer's position he had not been replaced and was to remain a Commissioner until he has been replaced. Similarly, Commissioners in Vermont had reapplied after the expiration of their terms and the application had not been acted upon. **Comm. Caduto suggested they be sent to her to advance them.**

Vote: Unanimous

**Strategic Plan status and next steps** – Lionel Chute. The plan items were discussed in accordance with Comm. Chutes document attached. The hope is that most of this will show meaningful progress for the next 6 months and that Commissioners will be actively involved in their assigned areas or others.

Comm. Campany suggested that the Commission reach out to the Conte National Wildlife Refuge. The two state governors had initially expressed their disagreement with the Conte plan. He thought it might be timely to ask them to reconsider their opposition. Timely because the new administration and Congress are more amenable to funding land conservation projects. The Conte had a much closer relationship with CRJC in past years. Comm. Bamford noted that the Local River Subcommittees have different views on the Conte Plan for additional conserved lands. Among the issues is loss of taxable lands.

Comm. Hastings noted that the Conte was able to start work. Steve Ageus, (from Fish and Wildlife,) as one of his assignments was to take on contacting individuals to act as a convener. Diane Timmons from Region 1 is also in favor on the Lyman Falls Dam removal project. **Staff was asked to provide Commissioner email addresses to keep them informed. Comm. Caduto is working with staff on reports that can be used to present to the state.**

**FERC Working Group** – Update and possible vote – Lionel Chute/ Jim McClammer. Letter was written and voted upon by the FERC working group. Comm. Griffin noted that she abstained from voting on the letter. This is also noted in the minutes of the FERC meeting. Comm. Chute noted he supported the letter and that it was well written and considered by the members of the group. It is a response to the GRH application. There are 10 points in the letter, most of which had previously been made in earlier communications to FERC.

One concept that had not been considered before was walking trails along the river which has grown in interest in recent months. This was noted as a possible item that GRH might be open to aiding in creation of these recreation facilities.

There was one small addition to include identification of invasive plants as suggested by committee member Kelly Stettner.

Discussion followed on the application itself. In the subcommittee's opinion missing were discussions about any adverse effects and mitigation of them. Comm. Hastings noted there was a meeting online the following week hosted by John Ragonese of GRH.

Comm. Bamford thanked the volunteers on the subcommittee, but felt that the letter was more adversarial than previous comments and more negative than necessary. She suggested alternative verbiage. Comm. Chute asked for an up or down vote stating this was not the time to rewrite the letter.

Comm. Griffin noted that FERC provided a letter to GRH that noted one deficiency and requests for additional information. FERC was not looking to the public to identify deficiencies at this stage of their review.

Comm. Company raised the support for revenue sharing and inquired whether towns had been consulted and how this was related to deficiencies in the application.

Comm. Griffin noted that this is not a comment period and CRJC is putting out comments outside the cycle of the relicensing process. Once FERC has completed the NEPA review, the public would be invited to comment.

Comm. Griffin noted that she had no objection to filing the comments, but was simply explaining the process. Comm. McClammer explained that 95% of the comments were made in earlier correspondence.

Comm. Bamford stated she understood that wordsmithing was discouraged, however, she suggested that #7 be removed because it refers to properties that are owned by Comm. McClammer. Comm. Chute stated that it was justified because of ease of access to the property. Comm. McClammer noted that the lack of identification of land owner's conveyance of flowage rights was deficient in the application.

Comm. Lembke said he wanted nothing in the letter that would harm the reputation of CRJC. He agreed that it could be toned down and it also needs proof-reading of the final document.

Comm. Company inquired whether revenue sharing had been included in earlier letters. Discussion continued. Comm. Kennett noted that she did not feel ready to vote on the letter in its current form.

Comm. Chute stated he would like to take a vote on the letter noting that the comments had been provided in earlier letters and contingent upon final proof reading being done. Comm. Bamford made a motion with the changes proposed by Comm. Chute and including her suggested language. Comm. Caduto seconded the motion.

Staff understood that the first paragraph was to be as drafted by Comm. Bamford's replacement language for number 1, number 7 would be removed, and the letter will be proofread before being sent.

Comm. Griffin recused herself from voting on the letter. Comm. Campany voted against sending the letter because he said, procedurally, it didn't seem to him that this was a formal deficiency comment letter. Comm. Bamford noted that FERC invited comment throughout the process. Comm. Campany felt he should consider the towns relative positions to revenue sharing. He abstained from voting.

**The motion carried with 2 Abstentions, one No vote, and 6 Yes votes.**

#### **Climate Migration – Project Update – Steve Lembke**

Comm. Lembke stated the document he sent out a few days ago will suffice. He is most interested in the collaboration with Antioch

#### **Antioch Intern – Marie Caduto**

Comm. Caduto and Olivia from UVLSRPC, had the first meeting with the students and staff working on the project. The first stage was research on the data needed and then what they think the impacts of this data will have on planning and preparing for climate migration. Comm. Lembke identified roles for Commissioners and staff identified in the document he previously sent.

**Connecticut National Estuarine Research Reserve – NOAA is creating an estuarine reserve for Long Island Sound. This is relative to the Connecticut River and it would be in the CRJC's best interest to voice that the watershed issue goes beyond the State of Connecticut to the Upper Watershed. If anyone is interested, she encouraged participation by Commissioners. She cannot attend**

the meeting on March 3, but she would be participating in several other meetings. If someone can attend the March 3 meeting Comm. Chute asked that they keep Comm. Caduto informed. The list of meetings included in the agenda is attached. **Comm. Bamford volunteered to cover the March 3 meeting with any bulleted points on the topic.**

#### **Other Business – None**

4:00 PM Comm. Caduto moved to adjourn seconded by Comm. Lembke.

Adopted: March 15, 2021

[Link to Google Doc](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Lf_yHxhaUAfbue1uFLoUPqxDIUWPEqX/view?usp=sharing)

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Lf\\_yHxhaUAfbue1uFLoUPqxDIUWPEqX/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Lf_yHxhaUAfbue1uFLoUPqxDIUWPEqX/view?usp=sharing)

Dear Patricia Crocker,

A series of online meetings is planned to gather public feedback on developing the priorities and goals for the proposed Connecticut National Estuarine Research Reserve.

Meetings are scheduled for the following dates and times:

Wed, Feb 3, 3:00 - 5:30 PM - Overview / Kick-off Meeting

Thu, Feb 4, 2:30 - 5:00 PM - Overall Strategic Plan

Wed, Feb 17, 2:30 - 5:00 PM - Coastal Training Program

Fri, Feb 19, 2:30 - 5:00 PM - Research & Monitoring Program

Wed, Feb 24, 2:30 - 5:00 PM - Education Program

Fri, Feb 26, 2:30 - 5:00 PM - Stewardship, Resource Management, Visitor Access/Uses

Wed, Mar 3, 2:30 - 5:00 PM – Partnerships: Friends group, NERR Advisory Board

Fri, Mar 5, 2:30 - 5:00 PM - Administration Plan, Volunteer Plan, Communication Plan

Wed, Mar 10, 2:30 - 5:00 PM - Facilities and Properties Development and Improvement Plan

Fri, Mar 12, 2:30 - 5:00 PM - Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice

No advanced registration or sign-up is required to attend; you may attend as many as you like.

A description of what we will cover in each meeting and **instructions on how to join the meetings** are available at:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YHfthMssomGxUX4AI8MvWPtXFWt3BtlF4\\_MJvaV9kU/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YHfthMssomGxUX4AI8MvWPtXFWt3BtlF4_MJvaV9kU/edit)

As of Monday, January 25, the information contained here (dates, times, connection info, etc.) will also be included on the project web page (<https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Coastal-Resources/NERR/NERR-Home-Page>) under the “Status Update” section.

We have tried to distribute information about these meetings broadly, but please feel free to forward this or point people to the project web site if you feel they should be invited.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Jamie Vaudrey (UConn, [jamie.vaudrey@uconn.edu](mailto:jamie.vaudrey@uconn.edu)) or Kevin O'Brien (CTDEEP, [kevin.obrien@ct.gov](mailto:kevin.obrien@ct.gov)).

Best regards,

Jamie Vaudrey, on behalf of the proposed CTNERR Steering Committee

Proposed Connecticut National Estuarine Research Reserve Steering Committee



Evan Ward, Ph.D.; Department Head, Department of Marine Sciences, UConn

Sylvain De Guise, Ph.D.; Director, Connecticut Sea Grant

Ivar Babb; Department of Marine Sciences, UConn

Craig Tobias, Ph.D.; Department of Marine Sciences, UConn

Jamie Vaudrey, Ph.D.; Department of Marine Sciences, UConn

Brian Thompson; Director, CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP) Land and Water Resources Division

Kevin O'Brien; CTDEEP Land and Water Resources Division

John Forbis; Connecticut Audubon Society

Ralph Wood; Connecticut Audubon Society

	<b>COMMUNICATION TO STATE GOVERNMENTS</b>	<b>ESTABLISH CRJC AS A NETWORK CONVENER</b>	<b>BOLSTER LRS ACTION AND LEADERSHIP</b>	<b>CREATE ROBUST VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT SYSTEM</b>	<b>CREATE INTERNAL SYSTEMS FOR FEEDBACK AND LEARNING</b>
create and distribute written CRJC updates to state and federal agencies convene and attend a VERMONT inter-agency meeting to improve communication and coordination	<b>Marie</b>  <b>Chris Marie</b>				
reach out to NEW HAMPSHIRE funding contact (i.e., Tracy) to improve communication and ensure continued funding	<b>Lionel Marie</b>				
participate fully in the FERC relicensing process Convene a forum (or forums) on the recent surge in growth and its anticipated impacts	<b>Lionel</b>	<b>Steve Chris Jen Jason Marie</b>			
Host 2 meetings as a service to our partners: 1) US Forest Service initiatives in the watershed, and 2) Silvio Conte, in early summer Reach out one-on-one to potential partners to learn how CRJC can assist their work as a convener		<b>Lionel Marie</b>  <b>Ken</b>			

<p>Delegate Commissioners to attend LRS meetings as a connective line between their work and the parent organization (e.g. Riverbend and Wantastiquet)</p>			<p><b>Ken</b></p>		
<p>Assist Olivia, as needed, with LRS recruitment materials and their distribution. Identify desired skillsets and recruit CRJC Commissioners. Include LRS network as a candidate pool. Identify other Commissioner recruitment avenues</p>			<p><b>Jason</b></p>	<p><b>Steve</b></p>	
<p>Develop internal systems. Possible approaches might involve conducting a review of the CRJC mission or the Strategic Plan's implementation, assessing Commissioner morale, or surveying LRS members</p>					<p><b>Jen</b></p>