



MINUTES

Connecticut River Joint Commissions

Hybrid Meeting – In Person and Zoom

Videoconference

Location: Upper Valley Lake Sunapee RPC

10 Water Street, Suite 225, Lebanon, NH

Monday, June 21, 2021

All members of the Commissions had the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through the Zoom Videoconference platform and the public had access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting.

Present at 10 Water Street:

Vermont Commissioners:

Steve Lembke

Chris Campany

Jason Rasmussen

Pete Fellows

New Hampshire Commissioners:

Lionel Chute

Jim McClammer

Jennifer Griffin

Staff:

Pat Crocker, UVLSRPC

Guest:

Mike Blatt

Present via Zoom Videoconference:

Vermont Commissioners:

Beth Kennett

Tara Bamford

New Hampshire Commissioners:

Ted Cooley

Lisa Murphy

Guest:

Tracie Sales, NHDES

2:00 PM The Annual Meeting was called to order by Comm. Chute.

Minutes of March 15, 2021 - By motion of Campany/Lembke the minutes of March 15, 2021 were approved unanimously.

Election of Officers - Comm. Bamford gave the report for the Nominating Committee comprised of herself and Comm. Chute. At a prior meeting Vermont elected the following officers for FY22: Steve Lembke- Chair, Marie Caduto- Vice Chair, and Jason Rasmussen for Secretary/Treasurer. At

a prior meeting New Hampshire elected Jennifer Griffin- Chair, Ken Hastings- Vice Chair, and Jim McClammer- Secretary/Treasurer. Comm. Bamford explained that this meant Steve Lembke will become the CRJC President for the coming year and Jennifer Griffin will become CRJC Vice President. She explained that per the CRJC Bylaws the remaining offices need to be filled from the pool of officers from the Vermont and New Hampshire Commissions, half from each state. Accordingly, she nominated Jason Rasmussen to be the CRJC Treasurer for FY 22. Comm. Bamford reported that the Nominating Committee became aware that neither Comm. Hastings nor Comm. McClammer are able to serve as CRJC officers in the coming year, and Comm. McClammer would prefer not to be on the Executive Committee. The Committee reached out to Comm. Cooley who will be taking Comm. Chute's place as the UVLSRPC designee and he indicated he would be willing to serve as a CRJC officer. Comm. Bamford reported that the Nominating Committee would like to nominate Comm. Cooley to serve as CRJC Secretary in FY22 contingent on New Hampshire Commissioners reconvening to replace Comm. McClammer with Comm. Cooley as New Hampshire's Secretary/Treasurer.

By motion of Campany/Fellows, the slate of Steve Lembke- President, Jennifer Griffin- Vice President, Jason Rasmussen - Treasurer and Ted Cooley- Secretary was approved unanimously.

New Hampshire Contract- Comm. Chute reported that before the Vermont funding situation was resolved the New Hampshire Commissioners had discussed with a smaller contract with Tracie Sales, NHDES and Meghan Butts, UVLSRPC. It was agreed to develop contracts with NHDES and UVLSRPC for \$9,500 as an interim step. Comm. Chute reported that Ms. Butts's proposal showed that this would cover the services of UVLSRPC to about November 1 if only the Subcommittee support was included. It would not be sufficient for any other essential administrative functions such as accounting or meetings. Comm. Chute offered to develop a contract with UVLSRPC for consideration based on the 2018 contract.

By motion of Lembke/Campany it was voted unanimously to accept the \$9,500 in funding from NHDES.

Right to Know Law Applicability- The issue of the applicability of New Hampshire's Right to Know Law RSA 91-A was discussed. It was discussed that while each state's Commission is a public body, when meeting together the Connecticut River Joint Commission are a 501c3 nonprofit corporation. It was agreed that New Hampshire's law requiring that a quorum be physically present in a meeting room is an impediment to participation for a body such as CRJC covering such a wide geographic area. **Comm. Griffin volunteered to research this question.**

Outgoing President Remarks - Comm. Chute reviewed the challenges faced by CRJC in the past year such as funding, loss of website, and needing to move the files. He felt these things got in the way of progress on strategic plan implementation. He recommends a focus on growing the state Commissions and bringing membership up.

FY22 Budget - Comm. Lembke and Comm. Griffin reviewed the budget from the past couple years and would like to take a closer look at each category before executing a contract with UVLSRPC. Their proposal for now is to contract with UVLSRPC for an amount not to exceed \$16,000 for the first quarter of the fiscal year. The intent is that this would be used for necessary expenditures only. Comm. Lembke explained that he intends to have a role in deciding what is essential; he is committed to preventing future overruns. **A budget subcommittee comprised of Comm. Lembke and Comm. Griffin will make recommendations to the Executive Committee regarding a work plan.**

By motion of Comm. Chute/Comm. Company it was voted unanimously to contract with UVSRPC for \$16,000 for essential services.

Financial Report - Comm. Griffin gave the Treasurer's report through May 31. Expenses incurred by UVLSRPC in excess of CRJC's FY21 budget, including required administrative tasks, staff support for the Local River Subcommittees and troubleshooting the website issues, are projected to be in excess of \$6,000. Several Commissioners expressed concern about the overrun and being caught by surprise by the size of the overrun. The general consensus was that, although this year was an attempt to manage with funding from New Hampshire only, there needs to be better communication between UVLSRPC and CRJC regarding expenditures on an ongoing basis in the future.

By motion of Lembke/Griffin, it was voted to amend the budget to pay \$6,395.58 to UVLSRPC from CRJC reserves with further review by the Executive Committee if additional costs come in for FY21. Comm. McClammer and Comm. Murphy abstained. Comm. Fellows voted no.

Recess for CRVRC Caucus- The NH Commissioners voted by motion of Griffin/McClammer to replace Jim McClammer as Secretary/Treasurer for FY22 with Ted Cooley.

At this point Comm. Chute left the meeting and Comm. Lembke took over as chair. Comm. Kennett also left the meeting.

UVLSRPC Contract and Workplan - Comm. Lembke reviewed the plans for he and Comm. Griffin to serve as a budget committee to develop a proposed workplan and budget for FY22 that will be the basis for a UVLSRPC contract for approval by the Executive Committee. All Commissioners will receive all of the material.

Website Update- Ms. Crocker explained that the website has been infected with malware for some time and that Bluehost has not been helpful and wanted \$299 more to fix the problem and provide security on the site that they are hosting for us. Comm. Griffin reported that her colleague at Great River Hydro who does IT reviewed the site and the options and recommended paying the fee and going with that option for now. Six months of hosting has been paid in the meantime while CRJC evaluates options. Comm. Fellows suggested it may be worthwhile to pay

more for hosting in the future and have a local host. Ms. Crocker has made a page for CRJC on the UVLSRPC website for now as the CRJC website remains unusable. All thanked Ms. Crocker and Great River Hydro for the time they spent trying to resolve the issue.

Local River Subcommittee Report - Ms. Crocker reported that a report had been emailed to her on Friday but was not available for the meeting. Comm. Lembke expressed concern that interaction between the Commission and the staff providing support for the Subcommittees has gone from meeting participation by the staff member to a subcommittee spokesperson to a document to nothing when this is the majority of CRJC's budget for UVLSRPC. He asked that there be more connection and documents in advance of the meeting.

Other Business -

Comm. Company asked for privilege of the floor as a Commissioner departing the Executive Committee to provide his recommendations for the future. He mentioned needing clarity on the open meeting law. There was discussion about whether or not reincorporating in Vermont would change the applicable law to Vermont's where only one member has to be physically present vs. a quorum. It was agreed that on-line participation that became the norm during the pandemic increased participation for most groups. **Comm. Company offered to assist Comm. Griffin in researching options.**

Comm. Lembke reported that the first Climate Migration Project event was postponed from March to October. The hope is that it can be a virtual event to increase participation. Comm. Company shared his observations that the COVID migration has increased awareness of the housing crisis. Municipal officials are realizing that with broadband comes more possibility for people to move to town and work remotely, but there are no rental vacancies and homes are selling quickly for asking prices.

Comm. Lembke thanked Comm. Chute for sharing his opinions earlier and expressed appreciation for all the work Ms. Crocker has done for CRJC. He listed off his priorities as President for CRJC for the coming year as follows:

- Shepherd the strategic plan
- Fill vacant seats
- Explore paths to being able to hold virtual meetings
- Hold the Climate Migration event
- Implement better financial management to ensure no overruns, including looking for tasks Commissioners can accomplish on their own like minutes
- Support the work of the Local River Subcommittees and hear reports on that work
- Hold meetings of the state commissions about twice a year to check in
- Ensure funders are kept informed of accomplishments
- Continue to engage in the FERC relicensing process, and work closely with Comm. McClammer to ensure the work of the FERC work group is better coordinated with the Commission

He expects quarterly Commission meetings and special meetings as needed, in addition to six Executive Committee meetings in the coming year.

Comm. Company mentioned the most recent letter to FERC and the issue of revenue sharing. He expressed concerns that this is a complicated issue for towns that CRJC has not worked through the issue. Comm. Lembke expressed his hope that communication between he and Comm. McClammer will help ensure that such issues can be discussed in advance rather than Commissioners receiving a letter at the last minute that they are asked to vote up or down.

Mike Blatt introduced himself and his interest in the Commission. He explained that he is working on developing a river ecology center in between Lebanon and Hanover.

By motion of Rasmussen/Company all voted to adjourn at 3:57 p.m.