



CRJC's mission is to preserve the visual and ecological integrity and sustainable working landscape of the Connecticut River Valley, and guide its growth and development through grassroots leadership.

Connecticut River Joint Commissions

Executive Committee Meeting
Monday, February 27, 2023 - 2 PM
Join Virtually via Zoom

ATTENDANCE

The attendance noted below is organized according to officer positions for each participating state Commission that together make up the Joint Commissions. The Joint Commissions officers are President (Jennifer Griffin), Vice President (Chris Company), Secretary (Ted Cooley), and Treasurer (Jason Rasmussen).

Officer	NH CRVRC		VT CRWAC	
Chair	Jennifer Griffin	V	Chris Company	X
Vice-Chair	Ken Hastings	V	Marie Caduto	V
Secretary / Treasurer	Ted Cooley	V	Jason Rasmussen	V
Most recent past CRJC President			Steve Lembke	V

Note: P = present in person; V = present over remote virtual platform; X = not present

Additional Virtual attendance: Olivia Uyizeye, Staff Consultant.

NO QUORUM.

NOTES

2:00 PM Convene

President Griffin convenes the meeting at 2PM.

1. Minutes Review (November Notes for information, February for Approval)

Due to lack of a quorum, February minutes approval is postponed.

On the November notes, no comments are made.

2. January Financials

Rasmussen reviews the January financials with no concerns to raise. Reporting that NH has paid what they were behind on by many months. As of the January financials everything seems to be in good shape.

Lembke asks for clarification on the reserves conversation. Rasmussen references a comment from Anne MacEwan in the December financial report, relating this to the line for Total Net Assets, found on page 2 in the regular financial reports. Uyizeye adds that this number can fluctuate from month to month, largely due to billing not taking place on a monthly basis, but rather a bi-monthly basis. The Total Net Assets as of Dec 2022 is reflected in the 6-month budget update, relating this to the contingency funds. This shows how it is expected the change in timing for the VT contract will affect CRJC finances.



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Rasmussen makes Commissioners aware that Anne MacEwan is available to attend EC meeting if further clarification or any financial questions need explanation.

3. Revitalization and Assessment Plan

a. CRJC – LRS relationship

Griffin and Hastings review a draft of the LRS survey and possible actions by Commissioners.

Uyizeye shares her perspective on the term special project that was deemed a high priority by LRS members. Examples of known special projects would include the septic smart workshop, management plan updates, water quality testing, or others (such as in person education events, or perhaps planning/fundraising for specific watershed improvements). The Riverwide speaker series is not really led by an LRS, so this is described as training/basic support.

Hastings suggests raising money to support mini grants for small projects by LRS members. Get LRS more actively involved, and open to communities and educators, in addition to LRS members. Lembke responds by proposing a hypothetical of \$500 for each LRS. CRJC would need some direction on the kinds of effort the LRS would be interested in taking on.

Cooley asks what could the grant pay for? (e.g., pay students for projects, tree plantings, conference attendance). Caduto, suggests asking in the off-season what projects LRS want to do, along with a minimal budget. Then pull that list together and seek funding for that specific collection in grant support. Hastings suggests encouraging in-kind contribution and sees this as seed money. Feels this could also spur states to add funding.

Lembke emphasizes the purpose of this to partly be for CRJC to give something to LRS members that makes them feel happy and proud.

Campany highlights the labor of subcommittees regarding permits and the official standing for NH, not in VT. Uyizeye notes that in VT, LRS are still commenting in VT. Caduto notes that most permits this can be done as public comment. Although there is no official role, the hope is that reviewers see these comments from a legitimate organization and are made more aware of CRJC presence. Campany suggests inquiring for more information on how those public comments are reviewed. This may also be helpful in NH. Specific to VT, ACT 250 comments require Party status.

Commissioners agree to review the summary and proposed actions before it is shared with LRS members.

b. Bi-state discussions going forward

Griffin acknowledges success on the climate migration event, which will continue to play out for the next few months. Caduto appreciated the positive evaluation responses. Lembke was glad to see the initial poll on who participants were, part of a diverse group.

Griffin turns the discussion to future bi-state discussion.

First discussion on Agriculture –

- Caduto explains that there seems to be multiple interests for one on agriculture, including discussion on the status for agriculture in the watershed, the LISFF VT ag



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project, and an update on the Long Island Sound TMDL that will impact farmers. This type of discussion is overdue with the last one maybe 10 years ago.

- Lembke notes interest by Commissioner Beth Kennett on this event. Lembke asks when the time is right. Caduto suggests shooting for Fall, likely November.
- Company suggests another focus for farmland conversion to residential, perhaps a 2-part event. Given the challenges for economic stability of many dairies, land is getting bought quickly and not necessarily by farmers. Tracking of farmland sales appears to be limited. Company suggests some similar challenges around forest lands, which could be another bi-state to easily follow after agriculture.
- Hastings notes that residential development on agriculture in the valley is limited due to much of their presence in floodplains, but still potential there.
- Uyizeye shares that agriculture will be a highlight in CRJC social media this year, in case there is a use of that material for bi-state.

There is also discussion on another bi-state water quality event. Caduto suggests convening this group when new information is available and when it reduces conflict with the busy field season. If not this summer, then within the next year.

Caduto and team agrees to work out more details and bring them to the March FC meeting.

4. Fiscal Year 2024

a. Revitalization and Assessment Plan Phase II

Lembke shares a draft Phase II plan. The opening reflects an acceptance of CRJC now as a viable organization able to fill organizational goals, primarily based on the bi-state meetings. While many of the goals are consistent from the last plan, there is increased focus on bi-state meetings and communications to extend and amplify CRJC. Lembke sees it as important for the promotion of CRJC activities.

Lembke is looking for comments from the Executive Board. Then an updated version can be presented at the FC meeting in March.

b. Leadership

Griffin sums up conversations to date on CRJC leadership for FY2024 with Ted Cooley as President, Marie Caduto as Vice-President, and Jason Rasmussen as Secretary/Treasurer. Cooley, Caduto and Rasmussen confirm this is acceptable, and no other comments are raised.

c. Priorities and Fundraising

Griffin notes that confirmation on Phase II will be rolled into the next fiscal with priorities reflected for both Commissioners and LRS.

Uyizeye provides a grant update. The NHCF Unrestricted grant is posted to look for updated this March 2023. Last year, the application was due in late Summer/Early Fall. The grant provides a total of \$20,000 for base funding to be spread evenly over 2 years.



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On the Long Island Sound Futures Fund, Uyizeye has confirmed that UVLSRPC is willing to be the lead on a stormwater planning application focused on this part of the watershed. This would allow CRJC to act as a primary partner, rather than project lead.

d. Budget timeline and approval

Griffin reminds everyone of the need to start thinking about budget for FY 2024.

Caduto informs the group of discussion on funding for the State of Vermont. For this fiscal year the amount was roughly \$31,000. Caduto has been asked that this number be rounded to a simpler figure. Caduto proposes to request the amount then be changed to an event \$35,000. The Executive Board agrees in the approach to request \$35,000 from the State of Vermont for the next fiscal year.

Lembke brings up administrative services and staffing. Uyizeye indicates that UVLSRPC interest/ability to provide consistent services/staff is not expected to see any major changes for the next fiscal year. Lembke suggests not going out to bid, although it is a requirement to do every number of years. Lembke sees this need as reasonable as the organization is still at a critical point to maintain staff support, although over a major hump. The Executive Board agrees in the approach to not go out to bid and maintain administrative services with UVLSRPC.

Commissioners appreciate the leadership from Lembke and Griffin over the past two years.

5. March Full Commissions agenda and speaker

Griffin will draft an agenda with Uyizeye for the March full commissions meeting.

6. Updates and Other Business

- Griffin reports no updates on the hydro-relicensing.
- Campany reports that the Friends of Conte are continuing conversation and determining a strategy to advance the Connecticut River Watershed Partnership act.
- Uyizeye asks about any follow up on the presentation from Rich Holschuh and Gail Golec. Griffin suggests keeping the Kchi Pontegok project on the list of bi-state discussions to follow up on in the coming years.

4:00 PM Adjourn

The meeting is adjourned.

Meeting notes respectfully submitted by Olivia Uyizeye.