



**MINUTES**  
**NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**June 16, 2004**

**Members Present:**

John Eresian, Vice-Chair, Hollis	Richard Roulx, Merrimack
Marilyn Peterman, Amherst	Bill Parker, Milford
Martin Michaelis, Amherst	Pierce Rigrod, Milford
Bradley Vear, Amherst	Gary Daniels, Milford
Helen Fenske, Brookline	Mike Fimbel, Mont Vernon
Howard Dilworth, Jr., Hudson	Vicky Arico, Mont Vernon
Suellen Seabury Quinlan, Hudson	Kathy Hersh, Nashua
Richard Maddox, Hudson	Jean-Guy Bergeron, Pelham
Thaddeus Luszey, Hudson	Tom Collins, Pelham
Tom Koenig, Merrimack	Leo Thibeault, Pelham
Donald Wunderlich, Merrimack	Becky Ohler, NH DES

**Staff Present:**

Steve Williams, Executive Director	Camille Pattison
Mark Archambault	Angie Rapp
Ryan Friedman	Shirley Vance
Carolyn Griffin	John Vogl
Betsy Hahn	Matt Waitkins
Koren Melfi	

The Vice-Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM.

**Privilege of the Floor**

There were no members of the public in attendance who wished to speak.

**Introduction of New Members**

The Chair welcomed new Commissioners Pierce Rigrod from Milford, Bradley Vear from Merrimack and Gary Daniels representing Cynthia Herman from Milford to the Commission.

**Approval of Minutes - March 17, 2004**

It was moved by Jean-Guy Bergeron, seconded by Marilyn Peterman:

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on March 17, 2004  
be approved.

The motion carried unanimously.

**Chairman's Report**

John reported that the Executive Committee had reviewed the proposed budget and work program for the FY 2005. We are doing quite well.

**Nominating Committee**

Vice Chairman Eresian asked Nominating Committee member and former Chairman Marilyn Peterman to assume the chair for the Nominating Committee report. Peterman reported that the Nominating Committee members were Marilyn Peterman, Andy Prolman and Kathy Hersh. They proposed the following slate of officers for FY 2005:

John Eresian, Chair  
Kathy Hersh, Vice-Chair  
Howard Dilworth, Jr., Treasurer

After a short discussion, it was moved by Marilyn Peterman, seconded by Mike Fimbel:

THAT the slate of officers as proposed by the Executive Committee be adopted for FY 2005.

The motion carried with Vice Chairman John Eresian and Becky Ohler abstaining.

Following the action on the Nominating Committee report, John Eresian resumed the chair for the meeting.

### Personnel Policy Amendments

#### **Health Care Benefits**

Steve Williams discussed the proposed amendments to the Personnel Policies. They were detailed in the memo sent to all Commissioners. They consisted of a change in the health insurance section and a proposed telecommuting policy.

The Commission currently offers 3 options: BlueChoice 3 Tier; Matthew Thornton; and Lumenos, a consumer driven plan. All employees are enrolled in BlueChoice 3 Tier. However, HealthTrust reports that most employees are not taking advantage of the self-referral or out of network coverage (only 3%). Identifying Matthew Thornton as the lowest cost plan would give employees basically the same coverage at a lower cost. Employees remaining with BlueChoice 3 Tier would be responsible for the costs above the 90% Commission contribution for the lowest cost plan. The proposed change in health insurance would result in a yearly savings to NRPC of \$12,828.

It was moved by Marilyn Peterman, seconded by Richard Roulx:

THAT the Personnel Policy be amended as follows:

**HEALTH INSURANCE** - All regular employees are eligible to participate in the group health insurance plan offered by the NRPC. Employees selecting the lowest cost plan would be eligible to participate on a 90% employer/10% employee basis for a 40-hour per week employee. Employees selecting higher cost plans would be responsible for all costs above the 90% employer contribution offered for the lowest cost plan. The agency contribution shall be reduced proportionately for employees with regularly scheduled weekly hours that are less than 40 per week.

The motion carried unanimously.

It was then moved by Mike Fimbel, seconded by Thaddeus Luszey:

THAT the Commission identify the HealthTrust Matthew Thornton plan as the lowest cost plan for 2004 per the Personnel Policy and authorize the 90% employer contribution for that plan.

The motion carried unanimously.

## **Telecommuting Policy**

Steve Williams proposed an amendment to the Personnel Policies removing the Off-Site Work section and adding a Telecommuting Policy and Agreement (attached).

Steve investigated other governmental agencies, and all agreed that the key to successful telecommuting is a good agreement. The Executive Committee recommended the adoption of this policy. Discussion followed regarding workers comp coverage, home inspections, enforcement, legality of software, etc. It was then moved by Thaddeus Luszey, seconded by Don Wunderlich:

THAT the NRPC Personnel Policy be amended by removing the Off-Site Work section and adding the Telecommuting Policy and Agreement.

It was then moved by Gary Daniels, seconded by Richard Maddox:

THAT the motion be tabled.

The motion to table did not carry.

The initial motion carried with Gary Daniels, Suellen Quinlan and Richard Maddox opposed.

## **FY 2005 Budget and Work Program**

Steve Williams discussed the proposed budget and work program for FY 05. One of the challenges facing us is personnel. Vacant staff positions are: Assistant Director; lead Land Use position; Koren Melfi will be leaving in July to pursue her education; John Vogl will also be leaving in July to work for the Town of Londonderry; and Camille Pattison will be taking a 4 month maternity leave beginning in July. Steve reviewed several items which were outlined in a memo sent to the Commission. They were: the overall budget; revenues; personnel expenses, retirement plan; and other expenses. Total expenditures represent a decrease of 8.67%. This decrease is actually the result of the completion of a few, very large transportation projects. The completion of these studies more than accounts for the decrease in the agency budget. The Executive Director and Executive Committee are proposing a 3.5% average merit increase for staff. The agency will realize a cost savings on the health care benefits due to the changes in the Personnel Policy approved earlier.

In terms of expenses, Williams identified several significant expenditures included in the proposed budget. NRPC has one employee who has been employed with the agency for almost 30 years. For the first 15 years, there were no agency retirement plan options. To make up for this situation, the Executive Director and the Executive Committee are recommending that the employee receive an addition contribution of \$16,000 this year to that employee's retirement account. In addition, the Executive Committee anticipates recommending that additional contributions of \$16,000 be made in each of the next two years. With two exceptions the other expenses proposed in the budget are typical of yearly agency operations. This year, the Executive Director and Executive Committee are proposing two large capital purchases: 1) a new plotter at a cost of \$5,500; and 2) a photocopier at a cost of \$10,000. The budget also includes \$10,000 for cosmetic improvements to the agency's office. The Executive Director will ask the landlord to participate with us in the improvements.

The Executive Committee reviewed the proposed budget and work program and recommended adoption by the Commission. Several questions were raised regarding individual line items. After some discussion it was moved by Howard Dilworth, Jr., seconded by Thaddeus Luszey:

THAT the Proposed FY 2005 Budget and Work Program be approved:

It was then moved by Richard Maddox, seconded by Bradley Vear:

THAT the anticipated revenue in excess of expenditure of \$11,743 be shown in the budget as going into the reserve fund.

The motion carried unanimously.

The original motion as amended then carried with Gary Daniels and Rick Maddox opposed.

### **2006 Local Dues Assessment**

Local dues for FY 2006 were proposed at \$140,000. It was moved by Richard Maddox, seconded by Marilyn Peterman:

THAT FY 2006 Local Dues be set at \$140,000.

The motion carried with Gary Daniels and Howard Dilworth, Jr. opposed.

### **Annual Grant and Contract Authorization**

On an annual basis, the full Commission must affirm that the Executive Director is authorized to file applications, sign contracts and implement the annual work program. It was moved by Kathy Hersh, seconded by Richard Roulx:

THAT the Executive Director be authorized to file applications with federal, state and local governmental units and agencies to implement the FY 2005 work program of the Commission, and to execute agreements to receive funds for such purposes.

The motion carried unanimously.

### **Circumferential Highway**

At the September 2003 and March 2004 meetings, the Commission had discussed future options regarding the policy NRPC should pursue on the Circumferential Highway. The three policy options considered were:

1. Full Support - Under this policy, NRPC and it's members would fully support development of the North Partial Build Circumferential Highway as shown on the attached map and would actively advocate for it's development with state and federal officials.
2. Withdraw Support - Under this policy, NRPC and its members would state that they no longer supported development of the Circumferential Highway and would cease advocating for it with state and federal officials. In addition, NRPC would not include the Circumferential Highway in its 2004 Long Range Transportation Plan that is currently under development.
3. Alternatives Analysis - With this policy, NRPC and it's members would state that they do not believe the North Partial Build Alternative as currently configured is feasible due to cost. However, they do believe that traffic issues in central Hudson and downtown Nashua due to the Taylor's Falls Bridge

are serious and that the four affected municipalities (Hudson, Litchfield, Merrimack and Nashua), NRPC and the NH Department of Transportation should conduct a study to identify feasible alternatives.

The Commission directed staff to contact the four municipalities affected by the project (Hudson, Litchfield, Merrimack and Nashua), present information on the alternative policies and request that the municipalities inform NRPC of their preferences. At the time of the March meeting, a response had not yet been received from Nashua and so discussion was continued to this meeting. The policy preferences that were expressed are as follows:

Hudson - After discussion by the Board of Selectmen, the Chair of the Board of Selectmen communicated to NRPC the consensus of the board in a letter. He stated that the Hudson Board of Selectmen continued to support the North Partial Build Circumferential Highway Project as proposed. However, they recognized that funding for the full construction of the project was unrealistic. Therefore they proposed consideration of alternatives (Policy Option #3).

Litchfield - The Litchfield Board of Selectmen stated that they supported the full North Partial Build Project. They stated that they recognized that the project would most likely be constructed in phases and that they believed that the phase that included the bridge over the Merrimack River should extend at a minimum to NH 102 (Policy Option #1).

Merrimack - The Merrimack Board of Selectmen stated that they supported the construction of the full North Partial Build project under the condition that it not include tolls. Otherwise, they stated that they would not support the project (Policy Option #1).

Nashua - The Board of Aldermen, at the recommendation of the Aldermanic Planning and Economic Development Committee, stated that the traffic issues in downtown Nashua due to the Taylor's Falls Bridge are serious and that the four affected municipalities (Hudson, Litchfield, Merrimack and Nashua), NRPC and the NH Department of Transportation should conduct a study to identify feasible alternative (Policy Option #3).

At their March meeting, the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee recommended that the Commission adopt Policy Option #3 and seek to work with the four affected municipalities and the New Hampshire DOT to identify alternatives to the currently proposed North Partial Build Alternative. Much discussion followed. Vicky Arico stated that we need to determine what the municipalities want and what they need. Kathy Hersh added that a river crossing is needed. Howard Dilworth, Jr. said that a 2 lane road with a 45 mph speed limit is not acceptable. Richard Maddox said that Hudson has designed their infrastructure around a highway that was never built, which has resulted in major traffic congestion. John Eresian said that we need to lobby effectively, make some noise, and make sure we're all on the same page. This road would have regional benefit. A bridge is definitely the key. It was then moved by Martin Michaelis, seconded by Don Wunderlich:

THAT the Nashua Regional Planning Commission support Option #3.

Rick Maddox moved, seconded by Mike Fimbel:

THAT the original motion be amended to ask the Executive Director to consult with DOT Commissioner Carol Murray to move forward with this project.

The motion carried with Vicky Arico opposed.

The original motion as amended then carried with Howard Dilworth, Jr. opposed.

**Regional Roundtable**

A Regional Roundtable was held.

It was then moved by, Don Wunderlich, seconded by Richard Maddox:

THAT the meeting be adjourned at 10:00 P.M.

The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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Stephen Williams, Official Recorder

**TELECOMMUTING WORK OPTION****Definition of Telecommuting**

Telecommuting is the use of telephones, and computers to enable an employee to work outside of the traditional workplace for a specified and regular number of days a week.

**A. Telecommuting Guiding Principles**

- Telecommuting is an alternative method for meeting the needs of our customers, our office and our employees;
- Telecommuting increases employee productivity and is an inducement to for the agency to attract and retain high quality staff;
- Telecommuting requires effective, supportive and ongoing communication by the employee with the public, other employees, and their supervisors;
- Telecommuting has a positive impact on the environment by reducing employee vehicle miles traveled with corresponding reduction in use of gasoline and reduction of air pollution;
- Telecommuting is a privilege that employees may earn and lose (based on their work performance and demonstrated ability to successfully work independently, etc.). It may be refused to individuals or terminated at any time;

**B. Work Option Description**

Full time employees that use this work option shall be in the office a minimum of 3 days/week while part-time employees shall be in the office for a minimum of 2 days/week. Writing, reading, telephoning, data analysis, word processing, and data entry are all tasks amenable to a Telecommuting work option.

**C. Eligibility**

The following factors will be used to decide whether Telecommuting is an option for those employees interested in participating in this work option.

- Does the employee have clearly defined tasks that can be accomplished off-site?
- Can the results and/or productivity be effectively measured without supervisor oversight?
- Can the present level of customer service be maintained or improved through Telecommuting?
- Is the current level of interaction with the public and employees minimal or can it be scheduled to permit Telecommuting?
- Can the needs of the job that may not be met from an off-site location be easily and fairly be reassigned?
- Can Telecommuting be accomplished through low-cost or no cost to the employer?

Employees that have a rating of below expectations on their annual performance evaluations are not eligible to participate in Telecommuting.



**D. Telecommuting Criteria**

As telecommuting forms a special employee-supervisor relationship, when an employee requests to use the Telecommuting work option the following traits and skills will be considered.

<b>Employee</b>	<b>Supervisor</b>
well organized	strong communication skills
independent and self-motivated	manage by results not monitoring hours worked
positive attitude towards Telecommuting	delegates work easily
high level of job productivity and knowledge	trusts employee's work ethic
requires minimal level of supervision	
comfortable with the idea of working alone	
strong time management skills	

Prior to initiating the Telecommuting work option the employee will sign the NRPC Telecommuting Agreement (see attached) and submit it for approval. The supervisor will periodically meet with the telecommuter, and other staff as appropriate (e.g., support staff, etc.), to evaluate the Telecommuting experience and make improvements as needed.

**E. Dependent Care**

Telecommuting is not a substitute for dependent care. Telecommuters must make dependent care arrangements, as they are required when working in the Office, to permit concentration on work assignments off-site.

**F. Telecommuting Equipment**

- Phones: Employees that telecommute will provide their own telephone. NRPC will provide a phone card for long distance calls. The employee will actively monitor voicemail and respond to calls in a timely fashion. Employees will be responsible for appropriate messages recorded for incoming calls.
- Computer and modem: Employees are responsible for providing their own computer. NRPC will provide specialized software if needed.
- Office furniture: Employees are responsible for providing ergonomically correct furniture and will maintain a clean, safe, and dedicated workspace.
- Supplies: NRPC will provide office supplies consistent with non-telecommuters.



# NRPC Telecommuting Agreement

**Telecommuting Employee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Effective Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. NRPC and I agree that at NRPC's discretion, I may perform portions of my assigned duties for NRPC at a location other than at NRPC as a telecommuter.

- Work Location and Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_
- Days/Week: \_\_\_\_\_
- Telecommuting Hours: # hrs./week: \_\_\_\_\_
- Expected # hours/day: \_\_\_\_\_

2. I understand that telecommuting is a mutually agreed on work option between my supervisor and me. My participation as a telecommuter can be terminated upon two weeks notice. Further, there may be instances that my supervisor may require me to work in the office on days that I would normally telecommute. My supervisor will work with me to provide advance notice when possible.

3. I understand the duties, responsibilities, and conditions of my employment remain unchanged. I will continue to comply with NRPC policies and procedures while working off-site. My salary and benefits remain unchanged.

4. I have been provided with the following equipment, including software, that I am responsible for:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

All NRPC equipment will be used solely by myself for office related matters. I will return all equipment within 48 hours upon termination of this agreement. Upon termination of the Telecommuting agreement any software provided for Telecommuting will be deleted from any computer. All long distance phone calls will be made with a phone card, provided by NRPC.

5. I agree to designate a workspace in my home for the purposes of Telecommuting. I will maintain this workspace in a safe condition, free from hazards, and other dangers to me and NRPC equipment.

6. As my workspace is considered an extension of my NRPC workspace, worker's compensation from job related accidents will continue to exist within the defined workspace during my Telecommuting hours. Any work-related injuries will be reported immediately to my supervisor. I understand that I remain liable for injuries to third parties and/or members of my family on the premises.

7. In understanding that while Telecommuting I will remain responsible to maintain professional standards of behavior at all times. When using the phone for NRPC business I will not allow my personal life to intrude into that communication. I will not use my home as a meeting location to



conduct NRPC business. If I leave my home when telecommuting for any agency purpose, I will dress in a professional fashion.

8. Individual tax implications related to the home workspace shall be my responsibility.
9. I agree that Telecommuting is not a substitute for dependent care and that I will make dependent care arrangements, as they are required when working in the Office, to permit concentration on work assignments off-site.
10. My supervisor and I will periodically evaluate my Telecommuting arrangement and communicate effectively about problems and successes of Telecommuting. These reviews will take place monthly for the first six months of this Telecommuting agreement. After the first six months we will meet on a quarterly basis.
11. I will ensure that my Telecommuting does not adversely impact the support staff either when I return to the office (e.g., major mailings the next day, etc.) or when I am working at home. I realize this will require good and frequent communication.
12. I understand that I may be expected to share NRPC workspace and equipment, as needed, with other part-time employees and telecommuters.
13. I will organize my work so that I effectively use my days in the office and set aside work assignments that lend themselves to Telecommuting. Further, I will maintain all office protocols such as voice-mail, computer files, etc.
14. I will organize my files and workspace so that others can find materials when I am telecommuting.
15. I understand this Agreement will be reviewed at the time of my annual review. I understand that Telecommuting is a privilege and that if my annual performance evaluation rating is below expectations I will lose the privilege of Telecommuting.

Signatures:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telecommuter

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date