



**APPROVED MINUTES
NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
Executive Committee
February 21, 2018**

Present:

Susan Ruch, Chair	Dave Hennessey
Karin Elmer, Vice Chair	Janet Langdell
James Battis, Treasurer	Sarah Marchant
William Boyd (arrived at 6:15)	Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja
Mike Fimbel	

Staff:

Jay Minkarah, Executive Director	Jennifer Czysz, Assistant Director
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1. Call to Order:

Ruch called the Executive Committee meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

2. Business

a. Appointment of Nashua Commissioner Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja to NRPC Executive Committee

Elmer made a motion to nominate Commissioner Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja to serve as an Executive Committee member for the remainder Tom Young's term, second by Fimbel. The motion passed 7-0-0.

b. Minutes: January 23, 2018

The Executive Committee reviewed the minutes from the January 23, 2018 meeting. Motion to approve the minutes made by Marchant, seconded by Hennessey. The motion passed 4-0-4.

c. Minutes: Non-Public Session – January 23, 2018

As the January 23, 2018 non-public minutes were unsealed they were incorporated into the public January meeting minutes and no additional action was required.

d. January/February Dashboard and Financial Reports

Minkarah reviewed the bank balances noting that they remain stable. There continues to be several months of operating reserve.

Minkarah reviewed the many events and activities staff participated in over the last month. Some highlights include the Ten Year Plan hearing, Regional and Statewide Coordinating Council meetings, Geographic Technical Advisory Subcommittee, and the Stormwater Coalition meeting. Melizzi-Golja noted the City appreciated Minkarah's participation at the Nashua Arts Marketing Committee meeting.

Web statistics are back up in the new year; there were several new documents released and advertised. Constant Contact remains unchanged with a 30% open rate. Social media continues to gradually increase.

The working budget is adjusted slightly to decrease revenues. There are some project contracts that were delayed resulting in funding shifting from Fiscal Year 2018 to 2019. Spending is also down.

The Profit and Loss shows the mid-year 50% target. Several contracts closed out at the end of December, a couple of which ended slightly over budget. The DOT contract is behind in billing due to transportation staff turnover. Now that Lantos is on staff, DOT billing should increase.

Looking at the Balance sheet, receivables are at about \$200,000 which is high due to invoices going out later in the month. There were a greater number of invoices at the close of the calendar year. Battis asked what the typical payment lag time is. Minkarah said invoices are paid fairly quickly.

Battis made a motion to accept and place the report on file for audit as amended to correct the dates on the Dashboard to reflect the current month, second by Boyd. The motion passed 9-0-0.

e. Acceptance of NHDES Local Source Water Protection Grant in the amount of \$19,996

Minkarah noted this item was informational only as the Commission annually authorizes the Director to accept and sign contracts, therefore no action was required as was noted on the agenda. This project will primarily occur during Fiscal Year 2019. The contract is expected to be approved by Governor and Council in May.

Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) will use the NHDES Local Source Water Protection Grant funds to determine improvements to local planning and emergency response protocols. Recent national events highlight the need for improved planning and emergency response to prevent large spill events that may affect drinking water quality and public health of residents within a metropolitan area. In the Nashua region there are hundreds of documented spills and releases of harmful substances, some of which are discharged into Pennichuck Brook and the Merrimack River, both primary sources of drinking water for the City of Nashua. For the purposes of this work, the study area for this project will include the following communities: Nashua, Hudson, Litchfield, Merrimack, Hollis, Amherst and Milford.

f. Traffic Vehicle Counter Installation and Removal Policy

Minkarah noted that Waitkins has been working with PRIMEX to develop a policy to ensure employee safety in the field, particularly when setting and retrieving traffic counting equipment. The document included in the Committee packet outlines basics such as wearing safety vests, sturdy shoes and a helmet when in the field. Staff should place cones and signage to alert motorists. Additionally, a first aid kit should be maintained in the vehicle. NRPC uses the agency van when in the field. It's positioning when parked is also important to ensure safety.

Fimbel recounted an incident he experienced during the fall when the orange safety vests worn by a road crew blended with foliage. Boyd asked how much time it takes to set up the equipment. Minkarah noted that it is worth the time investment.

Langdell suggested including language to address high volume traffic locations and any additional protocols that may be necessary. It was also noted that two staff persons are required at all times. Staff should be required to sign affirming they have read the policy. Related, Ruch noted the title should include the word "Policy."

A revised draft will be prepared for consideration at the next Committee meeting.

g. Report out from the February 8, 2018 NHARPC Meeting

Fimbel noted that HB 1616 was ruled Inexpedient to Legislate. NH DOT is hosting an event on March 20th on autonomous vehicles. Minkarah noted attendance is limited at the event. He and Lantos will attend for our MPO. NHARPC is taking a reduced role in legislative tracking this year. NH Municipal Association has partnered with NHARPC to produce a series of articles for Town and City accompanied by a webinar. Minkarah is partnering with Roache to do a one on Commuter Rail article for September 2018. Czyns noted this process began last summer, kicked off by NRPC with information on the new MS4 permit. Langdell requested a link to the online webinar produced as part of this effort.

The Committee discussed the increased scrutiny on lead paint as a result of recent legislation. New landlords may not be aware of lead paint requirements and new regulations going into effect requiring mandatory testing in NH and using a lower threshold. Accessory Dwelling Units that were not previously in the rental market are going to be problematic. Marchant, noted the legislation requiring testing is a massive win in NH. Melizzi-Golja noted that good nutrition is critical to combating lead poisoning in addition to prevention.

h. NRPC Staffing updates

Minkarah offered a brief staffing update. We are bringing on a part time temporary employee, Derek Stahl. He will be joining NRPC part time on March 5 and then ramp up hours as field work time increases in the summer. His current expected end date is December 31. Derek will free up Waitkins' time to do more of the day to day transportation planning tasks. If additional contracts come in, we may hire additional summer interns to assist.

3. Old Business

a. Pending Grants

NRPC submitted a \$60,000 Federal Highway Resiliency Grant in collaboration with Nashua's Emergency Management. The project focus will be to conduct a risk assessment of the major highway networks in the region. The primary risks to be assessed include flooding, severe weather and their impact on road and bridge conditions. Protocol to conduct the analysis is to be set by USDOT. The project will also look at culverts in the region. Elmer noted that DOT has the vast majority of culverts in NH inventoried. Next step will be to collect additional data on those locations. Grants are highly competitive and there likely will only be 8 selected nationally.

Langdell asked if the project will be regional in scope as it is in partnership with the City? Minkarah responded that yes, Nashua Emergency Management has a regional focus and the grants are only available to regional entities. Langdell followed up and asked what does the final product feed into. Minkarah replied that the work would support and enhance future Hazard Mitigation Plans and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan that will place a greater emphasis on risk assessments in the future.

b. NRPC Office Lease Update

An internal survey has been completed querying staff on preferred office amenities and locations. We have staff and guests travelling from numerous different directions and convenient parking and access was unsurprisingly important. The next step is a stakeholder survey to inform location needs and RFP criteria. The stakeholder survey has been sent to commissioners, TTAC members and others who regularly visit NRPC and there are 37 responses thus far. The space needs assessment was previously completed by Czysz and Baker. The RFP needs to be issued by the end of March.

Ruch noted we had previously discussed forming a subcommittee but we have not yet done so. Elmer noted that last time there was a committee of 4 that helped narrow down the proposals and conduct site visits as part of the decision-making process. She recommended taking action tonight to form the subcommittee. Langdell suggested the subcommittee consist of 3 Committee members and one Commissioner.

Battis made a motion to establish a subcommittee, second by Boyd. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Ruch named Elmer, Marchant and Hennessey to serve on the subcommittee.

c. NRPC 2018 Annual Forum

Thus far Minkarah has confirmed Russ Thibeault, Ben Frost, and John Stabile as speakers. He has a potential contact at Hitchiner and Marchant has connected with BAE that has agreed to provide a member of their Talent Acquisition Group to represent Human Resources. The plan is to have Thibeault set the stage outlining current NH economic trends then shift to the other panelists to speak to challenges and opportunities in recruiting new employees. Ruch recommended that Minkarah serve as the moderator.

4. Transportation Programs**a. Nashua Transit System Expansion Study**

The delayed 5305e Transit Expansion Study contract was recently approved by Governor and Council and we have received the notice to proceed. Langdell asked why contract was delayed. Czysz explained that while DOT had the federal funds the department's budget did not have all the funds appropriated as planning dollars. This was discovered last April when the FY18-19 UPWP contracts were being assembled. The 5305e grants were to be included with the UPWP. When the budget shortage was discovered the 5305e grants were pulled from the contracts to allow for DOT to visit fiscal committee to reallocate the funds resulting in a processing delay.

Minkarah noted that the first deliverable is to provide a compressed timeline and remove 7 months to conclude project work by June 30, 2019 as originally scoped. This will present a challenge as there is a significant amount of outreach. DOT has agreed to allow a 6-month extension, however the contract amendment to extend the deadline needs approval by Governor and Council.

The Committee discussed various opportunities and challenges associated with expanded transit to locations in the region, including the outlets. Langdell emphasized the importance of gauging public opinion of bus and educating decision makers on true public perceptions.

b. NH 101, 101A, and 122 Lighting

At the past meeting Minkarah reported that NHDOT is planning to remove a significant number of street lights. A presentation has been made to the Town of Amherst. Gordon Leedy has requested that DOT explain the criteria they used. There is concern that the removal of lights at many locations may pose safety risks.

Langdell and Boyd requested Minkarah forward the map of locations where DOT is planning to remove street lights.

c. TMA Update

NRPC staff continue to work with the other regional planning commissions to negotiate the final details of the agreement.

5. Other Business

The Hudson Board of Selectmen approved a contract for NRPC to perform an economic assessment of remaining industrial areas and potential locations for expanded commercial industrial uses. Ruch asked the timeframe and contract amount. The contract total is \$6,000 with the town paying approximately \$4,000 and NRPC contributing about \$2,000 of dues funds. The project has a 4 month turn around. The project includes a mix of land use, transportation and GIS components.

There was an amendment approved in committee to change the \$4 million appropriation for the Capital Corridor commuter rail to be a bus transit study. Elmer asked if the rail study could be privately funded. Boyd, has said there hasn't been interest. Minkarah noted he is still waiting to see final amendment language. The Committee requested copies when available.

6. Adjourn

The next regular Executive Committee meeting will be Wednesday, March 21, 2018.

Motion to adjourn was made by Elmer with a second by Boyd. The motion passed 9-0-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:34 PM.