



**APPROVED MINUTES  
NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION  
Executive Committee  
November 15, 2017**

**Present:**

Susan Ruch, Chair  
Karin Elmer, Vice Chair  
James Battis, Treasurer  
Mike Fimbel  
Dave Hennessey  
Janet Langdell  
Sarah Marchant

**Staff:**

Jay Minkarah, Executive Director  
Jennifer Czysz, Assistant Director  
Tanya Reinert, Finance Administrator

**Guests:**

Sheryl Burke, Melanson-Heath  
Alyssa Simard, Melanson-Heath

**Absent:**

William Boyd

**1. Call to Order:**

Elmer called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

Ruch arrived at 6:07.

**2. Business**

**a. Draft FY 17 Audit Presentation – Melanson-Heath**

Alyssa Simard introduced herself and walked through the three reports distributed to the committee in advance of the meeting. The auditors review NRPCs financials to ensure they are consistent with good accounting standards. Once again, NRPC has received a clean audit. She walked through a few items throughout the audit documents. Starting with the Annual Financial Statements, Simard highlighted the following:

- Pages 5-6: comparison of Fiscal Year 2017 to 2016.
- Page 8: provides a long-term perspective of long term assets and liabilities using full accrual. NRPCs only significant liability is accrued staff leave time. As NRPC does not participate in the state retirement system there are no net pension liabilities. NRPC has a very healthy total net position, a higher amount than most RPCs and an indicator of good management.
- Page 9: Presents the total expenses and revenues by governmental activity, as NRPC only conducts planning, there is only one line. NRPC ended the year very positively with a total \$101,153 change in net position.
- Page 10: the short-term perspective shows NRPC is still in a good position and provides a comparison to the full accrual method included on page 8. The primary difference is this method is based on compensated absences, when leave is used.
- Page 11: the differences of two forms of accounting presented on pages 8 and 10, differences are capital assets and accrued leave.
- Page 12: the comparison of revenues and expenditures shows that NRPC again had a positive year.

- Pages 14-20: present the notes to the financial statements which are consistent with last year, minus the funds previously due to DOT were repaid in FY2017.

Sheryl Burke presented the results of the Independent Auditor's Reports Pursuant to Governmental Auditing Standards and Uniform Guidance ("Single Audit"), which is a report on compliance with federal requirements. Burke noted that:

- This additional component is required for all entities that receive more than \$750,000 in federal funds.
- 1<sup>st</sup> part of the report indicates there are no internal control problems and that NRPC was issued a clean report.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> part addresses compliance with federal requirements, again there were no issues.
- Schedule of Federal Awards on page 6: NRPC is a low risk federal grantee and as such only 20% of our federal funding needs to be reviewed as part of the audit.

Hennessey made a motion to accept the audit reports as presented, second by Elmer. The motion passed 7-0-0.

**b. Minutes – October 18, 2017**

The Executive Committee reviewed the minutes from the October 18, 2017 meeting. Motion to approve the minutes made by Marchant, seconded by Hennessey. The motion passed 6-0-1.

**c. Minutes from Non-Public Sessions**

The Executive Committee reviewed the minutes from the September 20, 2017 non-public session. Motion to approve the minutes by Fimbel, seconded by Langdell. The motion passed 6-0-1.

**d. October/November Dashboard and Financial Reports**

Minkarah stated that NRPC remains consistent in bank balances, accounts payable and accounts receivable. We will be transferring some funds from the checking account to the money market account in the coming weeks. Staff participated in numerous meetings and activity over the last month. The GACIT hearing in Nashua very well attended. Staff also attended and presented at the Salem GACIT hearing. Additionally, within the transportation programs staff participated in the NH Rail Transit Authority's regular meeting, hosted the Nashua Regional Coordinating Council meeting, attended the State Coordinating Council meeting, and met with staff from SNHPC to discuss the TMA agreement. Several individuals participated in the NHPA Annual meeting and the NHHFA Housing and Economy Conference. GIS staff attended several professional development events including the Northeast Arc Users Group Conference and New England Urban and Regional Information Systems Associations Conference, as well as the regular State GIS Technical Advisory Subcommittee meeting.

In addition to the scheduled October HHW collection event, Minkarah, Czys and Longval attended the Amherst, Pelham, Hudson and Windham Board of Selectmen meetings and the Nashua Board of Aldermen to present the HHW Cooperative Agreement for review and approval. The HHW agreement was well received in all communities. Windham was less so and had some opposition. Ultimately the Selectmen did vote to sign the agreement. Minkarah and Longval will be presenting the agreement tomorrow night in Merrimack. The Committee generally discussed the HHW program and collection schedules debating the benefits of Pelham versus Windham for a collection location. Windham has requested a collection in their town.

Hudson's Selectmen offered up some suggestions for how to improve outreach to increase participation. Minkarah noted that NRPC has pending NH Charitable and Kresge Foundation grant applications to increase HHW outreach efforts.

Several Committee members were also in attendance at the NHHFA conference. Hennessey questioned lack realtor participation in the panel discussion. Marchant noted that Nashua is trying to shift away from senior housing development. Elmer noted there is more assisted living coming into Bedford. Langdell said there is a need to promote small market rate starter homes and apartments, and while such proposals might meet zoning it is not publicly supported, making the community unaffordable. Marchant further noted that there are an increasing proportion of small households that don't need big houses; however regulations increase land costs and as a result drive up construction and housing costs. Hennessey added that lumber costs are up 32%, further increasing new construction costs.

Elmer asked about NHRTA meeting. Minkarah was impressed with Patricia Quinn's presentation of the Downeaster and how entrepreneurial the system has been. Forty percent of ridership is from NH. NH riders tend to be commuters as opposed to Massachusetts and Maine riders who are more likely to be travelling for leisure. The Downeaster has implemented a varied schedule based on Boston sporting events and sell MBTA Charlie Cards on the train. They will also be selling discount packages for UNH parents to buy as gifts for students. Regarding the proposed NHRTA legislation to expand the Authority's role to encompass multiple transportation modes, the sentiment is survival. Marchant cautioned that Nashua would not want the revised role of the body to be overseeing local bus and transit.

Minkarah reported on his attendance at the monthly RPC directors meeting. The NH DOT Commissioner met with the Directors. It was a good discussion of both policy and procedural issues. NRPC has been doing well comparatively and not facing some of the same challenges as other regions with invoice processing. Collectively all agreed to have the Commissioner to meet with the Directors quarterly to improve communication and collaboration between DOT and the regions. There was further discussion at the meeting over the CMAQ delays and issues.

Minkarah and Waitkins attended the NH Planners Association meeting and workshop. Minkarah was impressed with Town of Bristol and work they have done. The presentation highlighted a great planning process with strong community engagement and project implementation through grant seeking (TE funds).

Website statistics are up in a few areas, likely due to the recent HHW collection event. There are a couple pending grant applications. The Profit and Loss shows that budget drawdowns on track and there are no cash flow issues. Legal expenses are slightly high for this time of year due to HHW agreement. The Balance Sheet is also in great shape with adequate cash on hand.

Battis made a motion to accept and place the report on file, second by Langdell. The motion passed 7-0-0.

**e. Working Budget Update**

Minkarah distributed a copy of the draft working budget and walked through the changes – refer to document. Federal contracts are higher due to additional Hazard Mitigation funds that came in after the budget was adopted; otherwise revenues aren't significantly changed from the adopted budget. On the expense side there are changes to the salaries and employee benefits

lines to reflect staffing changes. The Capital Equipment line is increased for the purchase of a new plotter and the office expenses line increased for the acquisition of updated software and other IT related items. Minkarah will have an updated document for review and adoption in December.

### 3. Old Business

#### a. Nominating Committee Executive Committee Membership

The nominating committee consists of Fimbel, Langdell, and Ruch. Hennessey suggested an appeal for new Executive Committee membership on the December Commission agenda. Ruch will draft an email to send out to the full Commission prior to the meeting.

#### b. Personnel Policy Discussion Update

Minkarah reported that a meeting was held with staff to distribute the policies and review the changes. Staff was provided with a form to sign acknowledging receipt. Minkarah has met one-one-one with those that may be impacted by the vacation accrual cap and is developing a strategy to draw down time. Czysz noted that the only staff comments were related to the protected anti-discrimination classes, particularly the omission of gender identity. Committee agreed to the intent was to be as inclusive as possible.

Langdell made a motion, second by Hennessey to expand the list of protected classes to include gender identity. The motion passed 7-0-0.

#### c. NRPC Office Lease

Minkarah provided a brief update. There was a past survey that he will revisit and plans to discuss staff interests at the next staff meeting. Hennessey has a contact for a large property owner in the area that would like to be included in the RFP distribution. Marchant and Minkarah discussed opportunity to partner with the Nashua Chamber who is looking to move in about 6 months. Marchant also noted there may be an opportunity in the Millyard and those property owners should also be included in the distribution list. Locations that provide shared conference room and kitchen space would be considered and could reduce costs. Ruch noted there could be some obstacles to sharing. Ruch requested a timeline be prepared for the next Committee meeting.

#### d. NRPC 2018 Annual Forum

All agreed that continuing to hold the forum at the Courtyard by Marriott would be ideal. A few dates were proposed based upon the fewest conflicts with municipal calendars: January 31, March 28, and March 29. Ruch likes January and most committee members agreed. Czysz noted that she and Regional Planner Mullen can't attend if it is the January date. It was also noted that there is not much time to prepare for an event in January. The March 29<sup>th</sup> date would allow staff to attend and it would be after town meeting. Marchant noted that the March date would also fall right about at crossover.

All requested the theme be economic development and build off of last year's event. Fimbel asked if Housing is part of economic development. Elmer and Marchant recalled the AARP and Stay-Work-Plan presentation at the NNECAPA conference. Fimbel asked if it would make sense to have a builder talk about what it would take to build a more affordable housing scale that works in rural communities. The Homebuilders Association another possible organization that might be able to speak. Langdell suggested a shift to workforce development and identify a



business such as Hitchner to talk about the challenges they face and successes they have achieved. Marchant noted BAE has identified housing as a challenge to filling positions. Minkarah added this would be a good tie between housing and economic development.

#### **4. Transportation Programs**

##### **a. MPO Coordinator**

Gregg Lantos has been hired as the new MPO Coordinator. Lantos was formerly a senior planner here at NRPC about 20 years ago and comes with a well-rounded background. His first day is December 11<sup>th</sup>.

##### **b. TMA Update**

Minkarah and Czys have been talking with SNHPC to outline the process for working collaboratively. As the programming authority once implemented will be a reversal of roles with NH DOT, we will need to figure out how to navigate that change. SNHPC TAC will be meeting this week to review the draft and their policy committee will meet on December 19<sup>th</sup>. Committee members discussed the draft and asked about collaboration with Massachusetts communities and whether they should be included as non-voting members. Czys noted that Massachusetts receives a separate allocation of Nashua UZA funds from USDOT. We need to define how Committee members are appointed. Is it by governing body? Does the process allow for the appointment of alternates?

#### **5. Other Business**

Langdell asked whether the HHW funds are maintained in a separate account. Czys replied yes.

#### **6. Adjourn**

The next regular Executive Committee meeting will be Wednesday, December 20, 2017.

Motion to adjourn was made by Battis with a second by Hennessey. The motion passed 7-0-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:12 pm.