CHITTENDEN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

JOINT EXECUTIVE & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

DATE: Wednesday, March 4, 2020

TIME: 5:45 p.m.

PLACE: CCRPC Offices, 110 W. Canal Street, Suite 202; Winooski, VT 05404

PRESENT: Mike O'Brien, Chair (via phone) Catherine McMains, Vice Chair
Chris Roy, Immediate Past Chair Chris Shaw, At Large >5000
Jeff Carr, Finance Committee Member

ABSENT: Barbara Elliott, At Large <5000 John Zicconi, Treasurer

STAFF: Charlie Baker, Executive Director Regina Mahony, Planning Mgr.
Forest Cohen, Senior Business Mgr.
Amy Irvin Witham, Business Office Associate

The meeting was called to order at 5:45 p.m. by the Vice Chair, Catherine McMains.

1. Changes to the Agenda, Members’ Items. There were none.

2. Approval of February 5, 2020 Executive Committee Minutes.
CHRIS ROY MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY CHRIS SHAW TO APPROVE THE MINUTES WITH EDITS.
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
The following edits were requested:
- Update PG 2, Line 30 – change the acronym HSIP to “Highway Safety Improvement Program”
- Update PG 2, Line 15 - update “Charlie’s” to “Charlie”

Per Catherine McMains, the meeting moved from Executive Committee items into Finance Committee items.

3. Approve Quarterly Journal Entries October to December 2019 (Finance Committee business)
Forest referred members to the Journal Entries dated October 2019 through December 2019, included with packet. Members reviewed and discussed. Jeff Carr asked about the closing of a CD;
Forest explained the CD was moved to Opportunities Credit Union, with the Checking Account when that was transferred. Jeff also asked if the Water Quality expenses were related to recent developments with Clean Water Service Providers, Charlie and Forest explained, no, these are Water Quality Block Grants. JEFF CARR MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY CATHERINE McMAINS, TO APPROVE THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL ENTRIES. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. FY20 Financial Statement Review July-December 2019
Forest Cohen provided a financial brief for the period covering July 2019 through December 2019. He also reminded members, at the previous Executive & Finance Committee Meeting, John Zicconi asked for an explanation of the $300,000 difference between the current and previous years. Forest referred members to the “Change in Cash Year Over Year” document included with the packet. He explained the difference comes down to timing, the balance of bank accounts in relation to receivables and payables. When comparing monies month after month, we are not actually down $300,000 in cash, the amount is closer to $70,000, consistent with our FY19 year-end result.
Balance Sheet December 31, 2019 - Cash in checking, operating at $203,488; Cash in Money Market (reserve) at $176,584. Current assets over liabilities, $608,311. Deferred Income Communities (match) at $169,285. Jeff asked how the interest rates compared with the shift from commercial bank to Opportunities Credit Union and asked that we consider on-going, future monitoring of rates between banking institutions. Forest explained the interest revenue is higher with the move to Opportunities Credit Union.

Income Statement, through December 2019 Forest addressed members, and reviewed the Income Statement. He explained after generating positive income in FY20 through October, we’ve had two negative months back to back, which brings us to the ($71,442) year to date. This tracks with previous years that ended with negative income at the end of December. We’ve budgeted for ending the year at $0 and have an indirect rate this year that should get us there, so the current number is behind expectations. Although the $70,000 is a bit more than anticipated at this point in the year, expenses are okay, since we are 49%. Our cash flow through January is adequate for operations. However, there is a $50,000 to $60,000 reduction in projected actuals versus the original projection. This isn’t critical to our financial position, but it is something to monitor. Forest feels the cash position is the result of our lower than expected revenue generation through the first half of the fiscal year. The Transportation line is down, which is based on Transportation Staff being out of the office for a period. We need to do a better job billing the transportation staff-time line through the second half of the year in order to hit our budget expectation and break even. Members reviewed and discussion regarding budgeting and the ebb and flow of consultant billings ensued.

5. First Draft FY21 Operating Budget
Charlie presented the draft FY21 operating budget to members. He explained we are trying to mitigate health care costs and decided to go with a new plan and system. Members discussed salary changes based on the Compensation Study finding. Jeff Carr stated it is important to look at total compensation including the benefits package, and members agreed. Charlie reminded members the compensation study helped to guide and determine these updates, and this is the highest proposal in a while. Mike asked about promotions, what is the base raise percent; Charlie explained it is closer to 4%, which is comparable to our municipalities and figures are very comparable to what the Burlington market is. He said we have had conversations with staff, and although we may not have the highest salaries, the overall package is solid, as it includes a flexible work environment and robust benefits. Members discussed training and conference expenses, specifically travel costs. Charlie explained, staff typically try to attend one local and one regional conference that includes travel, annually.

At 6:20 p.m. the meeting returned to review of Executive Committee items.
CATHERINE MCMAINS ASKED FOR A MOTION TO CLOSE THE FINANCE COMMITTEE PORTION OF THE MEETING; JEFF CARR MADE A MOTION TO CLOSE, SECONDED BY CATHERINE MCMAINS. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. ACT 250 & SEC 248 Applications.
Regina explained that there are three stages of review in the PUC process: preferred site status when requested; 45-day pre-application notice; and final comments once the petition (aka application) is submitted.
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a. **Preferred site letter, Encore Renewable Development; Bolton.** Regina noted this is a request for preferred site status. This request is for the construction of a 500kW solar array to be located on Roosevelt Highway (US 2) in Bolton, VT. The subject parcel is owned by the DesLauriers family. The applicant has requested a letter from the town and CCRPC to designate the site as a “preferred site”, as described in PUC Rule 5.100. CCRPC Staff supports the identification of the site as a preferred site for net metering as the proposed project advances the 2018 ECOS plan’s goal of increasing renewable energy generation in Chittenden County. This review is based on a draft site plan. CCRPC will review the final site plan when it is submitted with the 45-day notice of application, and with the full Certificate of Public Good application, to ensure the proposed project continues to avoid known constraints and attempts to minimize impacts to possible constraints. Mike asked if there was an aesthetic component. Regina explained there are a few towns that have identified scenic resources as a local constraint so we’d only address it in those municipalities; and Chris Roy explained, regardless, the PUC does have an aesthetic component requirement that they will review. **CHRIS SHAW MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY CHRIS ROY, TO APPROVE THE LETTER TO JUDITH WHITNEY, CLERK OF THE VERMONT PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

b. **VELCO Sandbar Substation Upgrades; Milton; #20-0444-PET** Regina stated this was seen previously, in September, for the 45-day pre-application review. The CCRPC received the Section 248 Petition for a Certificate of Public Good filed with the Vermont Public Utility commission for the Sandbar Substation at 586 Bear Trap Road in Milton, Vt. The project is an upgrade of an existing substation. CCRPC reviewed and submitted comments on the proposed project during the 45-day notice period. CCRPC has now reviewed the project again upon submittal of a full petition in regarding the project’s conformance with CCRPC’s 2018 ECOS plan. The project meets the intent of the Energy Goal of the 2018 ECOS Plan, and as the project replaces existing infrastructure without expanding the existing impervious substation yard, it complies with the plan’s constraint policies. The project currently conforms to the CCRPC’s 2018 ECOS Plan. **CHRIS SHAW MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY CHRIS ROY, TO APPROVE THE LETTER TO JUDITH WHITNEY, CLERK OF THE VERMONT PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**
7. **Personnel Policy Update.** Charlie reminded members we looked at these proposed changes in January. He referred members to the memo as well as the pages from the Administrative and Operating Policies and Procedures for the CCRPC with the proposed edits highlighted. Most of the updates were administrative in nature, with little to no impact on daily functioning of the CCRPC, the staff, or to the budget. More substantive updates include the updated salary ranges and a proposed increase to the life insurance benefit. The cost of the proposal to increase the current life insurance benefit is from $50,000 to two times an employee’s annual salary up to $200,000. The quote received from our insurance broker brings the price for the increased benefit to $6720 annually, up $3840 from the current cost. Charlie explained it makes sense to implement the new salary ranges and the increased life insurance benefit effective at the beginning of the fiscal year. The rest could be effective immediately, following approval. Staff recommends the personnel policy updates be approved as presented with edits as the Committee sees fit. Staff is asking that the Committee recognize that some format and document changes will result from the updates that aren’t as substantive to policies and procedures, such as page numbering and dates, that aren’t being presented here. Members discussed the updates. Chris Shaw asked how paid time off is accrued; can you accrue time when you are on paid leave? Forest and Charlie explained how paid time off works, specifically, time does not accrue if an employee is on an unpaid leave. Mike asked for clarification on combined time off and holiday time; no, the holidays are separate from employees paid time off. Regarding the salary changes, Charlie reminded members the updates are a result of the findings from the Compensation Study. He referred members to the draft document included in the packet, **Appendix A, Salary Ranges** that outlines the proposed updates in terms of salary range, job titles, and broad descriptions. Members discussed the changes. Mike asked for more details on the life insurance policy change. Charlie and Forest explained, based on the compensation study, the industry standard is typically two times salary. CHRIS ROY MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MIKE O’BRIEN, TO APPROVE THE PERSONNEL POLICY UPDATES AS PROPOSED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

8. **Clean Water Service Provider Proposal Update.** Charlie stated that based upon the recent meeting with partners in the Direct to Lake Basin and conversations with the DEC, if no one else steps up to fill the need, the RPC’s will. From a policy perspective, we have not been embracing this too strongly, as we need to ensure that the rules being drafted will work. The Northwest RPC already has an agreement to support the Lamoille and Missisquoi. He is hopeful the Direct to Lake will be simpler to manage, since it is a highly regulated watershed with the MS4s. Charlie said he continues to inquire if any other entities are interested in becoming a CWSP. To date, there have not been any other interested parties. Charlie said the draft proposal should be ready at the end of March, with hopes to be close to the final draft by the April board meeting. Charlie said he is not totally confident that CVRPC will take on the CWSP role for the Winooski, which means we may need to take on that basin as well. He said we are working closely with DEC staff and other partners in developing the draft rules and guidance. Also, he asked for feedback since the DEC is worried about Conflict of Interest. Members discussed various ways to handle. Charlie said stay tuned, more information will come and there is a Winooski Partner meeting scheduled for the end of March. Members discussed various ways other organizations might support and help with this endeavor.

9. **Chair/Executive Director Report.**
a. **Legislative Update:** Charlie noted there is an Act 250 committee meeting next Tuesday morning. Member discussion regarding Act 250 changes ensued. Charlie said we do need to be prepared to discuss this in the Senate, as there are likely to be a few more adjustments. The Housing Bill will be voted on in a couple of weeks. Also, we are paying more attention to the Global Warming Solutions Act as many of the goals are closely related to our Energy Plan. Charlie also mentioned we continue to work with the Community Justice Center, as they figure out a different model.

b. **UPWP Update:** Charlie said they have arrived at a place where it should be easy to agree on what to fund. There were a few proposed projects that will be deferred for a year and some items were ineligible.

10. **Review Agenda for March 18 CCRPC Board Meeting.** Charlie referred members to a handout that details meeting minutes topic breakdown for the CCRPC board Meeting Agenda items. Members discussed ways to ensure there is equity between transportation and regional planning items moving forward. Charlie asked members to review the updated March 18, Board Meeting Agenda; Charlie explained additional language was added to address the potential need for members and the public to access meetings remotely, via conference call and/or video. He explained this is also in response to recent developments with the coronavirus to ensure we have a plan in place. Discussion regarding general meeting guidelines for announcing when people are speaking, and the need to hold roll call. Charlie also stated some of our towns have been asking for the ability to participate remotely. Members reviewed and adjusted the proposed Agenda; changes include the addition of an agenda item to ask for feedback on future items of discussion and to move the Legislative Update to a separate business item.

11. **Other Business:** There was no other business. Mike asked about the location for the annual meeting. Charlie stated the venue will be at the Sunset Ballroom. There is concern the GBIC meeting could conflict with our annual meeting.

12. **Executive Session:** There was none needed.

13. **Adjournment:** CHRIS ROY MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY CHRIS SHAW TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:51PM. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Irvin Witham