CHITTENDEN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
JOINT EXECUTIVE and FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
DRAFT

DATE: Wednesday, January 4, 2023
TIME: 5:45 PM
PLACE: Remote Attendance via ZOOM

PRESENT:	Catherine McMains, Chair	Chris Shaw, Vice-Chair
	Bard Hill, Secretary/Treasurer (**5:55 PM**)	Michael Bissonette, at large <5000
	Mike O'Brien, Past Chair	Jacki Murphy, at large >5000
	Jeff Carr, Finance	Amy Bell, VTrans
STAFF:	Charlie Baker, Executive Director	Eleni Churchill, Transp. Prog. Mgr.
	Taylor Newton, Planning Prog. Mgr.	Forest Cohen, Senior Business Mgr.
	Amy Irvin Witham, Business Office Mgr.	Mckenzie Spear, Business Office Assoc.
	Anne Nelson Stoner, Equity Mgr.	Bryan Davis, Senior Planner

1. Call to Order, Attendance. The Joint Executive and Finance Committee meeting was called to order by Catherine McMains at 5:48 PM.

2. Changes to the Agenda, Members items. There were none.

3. Approval of the December 7, 2022, Joint Finance and Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
CHRIS SHAW MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MIKE O'BRIEN TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 7, 2022, JOINT EXECUTIVE AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES WITH EDITS. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

    - Edit: Delete the time reference of 5:55 PM for Mike O'Brien.

4. Act 250 & Section 248 Applications.
    a. Mercier Drive, Colchester Solar Siting correspondence
    Taylor Newton noted this project has been seen previously and referred members to the Colchester Solar Siting draft petition letter with accompanying maps included with the packet. The project is for the construction of a 150kW solar array located at 0 Mercier Drive in Colchester, VT. The parcel is owned by the Town of Colchester. Taylor explained that 1/3 of the project occupies a wetland. The CCRPC found the proposed project meets suitability and constraints policies of the 2018 Chittenden County ECOS Plan assuming a State wetlands permit is obtained and approved by Agency of Natural Resources.

    Jacki Murphy said Colchester is hopeful the project goes through; a lot of effort has been made for this and she is hopeful the wetlands permits is approved by the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR).

    Mike asked if this was an existing wetland or if it was formed from outside factors? Taylor said it could have something to do with sand extraction during the construction of the Beltline. Mike hopes ANR takes this into consideration.

JACKI MURPHY MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY CHRIS SHAW, TO APPROVE THE FULL PETITION APPLICATION LETTER. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. FY23 UPWP and Budget Mid-Year Adjustment

Charlie referred members to the FY23 Mid-Year Budget and UPWP Draft documents included with the packet. He and Forest created three versions of the draft budget. He said this is the first time the CCRPC has been in a situation with an increase in ACCD funding which came between the time when the budget was adopted and the mid-year. Charlie said this is a big budget. With a total revenue amount of $7,638,296 it is the largest we have ever had. Charlie highlighted various items, including the following:

- Charlie reminded members the CCRPC applied for and received the US Department of Transportation RAISE Grant. The grant is $2.1 million dollars to be spent over a three-year period. He explained it will take some time to be under a formal contract. The CCRPC has staff and consultant dollars allocated to this and pointed out the budget line of $100,000 for consultants. He explained, in terms of staffing levels, we are currently stretched thin and will likely need to bring in a consultant to serve as project manager. The first step will be sending out Requests for Proposals (RFP's). The scope of the work includes Transit Oriented Development plans for up to 12 communities within the Northwest region of Vermont in counties of Addison, Franklin, Washington, Chittenden, and Rutland. The project is focused on communities that have rail lines. CCRPC has asked municipalities to return a commitment letter by January 20, 2023. This will provide us with a clear idea of which towns are interested. This project will be a part of the FY24 work program.
- We expect to have close to $100,000 in Brownfields monies coming in, however, we did not receive the Brownfields Grant through the EPA. We will apply again next year.
- There is also $6,500 in new funding for a floodplain map and bylaw update project. We have a contract with Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).
- The health department has a hot weather emergency response project with $6,676 budgeted.
- There is $16,286 in Broadband funding budgeted in staff time for Communications Union District (CUD). The CCRPC is facilitating this process. We do not expect to support long term, but we will help get this started. There may be a total of $300,000 coming through our budget.

Chris asked if the $60,000 on the Regional Planning Grant ACCD line was separate? Charlie said yes, it is being distributed between a few different projects. Charlie said with all the work coming our way, hiring additional staff was also worked into one of the budget versions as well as the proposal for a midyear bonus for current staff. Charlie asked members to weigh in on these.

Jeff Carr agreed with this approach. He said during the present climate, particularly with the labor market and the status of funding flowing our way, the CCRPC is currently in the "golden age "in terms of finances. He cautioned there could be a very different picture over the next three or four years and we don't want to be in a position where we must let staff go. Charlie said several staff members are looking at retiring over the next few years, and staff reductions, if needed, will occur naturally through attrition.

FINAL

Mike O'Brien asked what the excess revenue will do to the indirect rate and wondered if we need to explain the increase in local dues to the towns because we have a surplus. Charlie said he and Forest examined the indirect rate today and found very minimal impact. He explained we want to increase our reserves to the goal of 3 months of expenses to protect the municipalities. Chris agreed taking care of employees is a benefit for the future. He asked what the proposed bonus amount is. Charlie said he would like to give $1000 per employee which totals $19,000. Jacki Murphy asked if there were enough funds in the salary budget line to cover hiring new staff and bonuses. Charlie explained there is an $80,000 difference between the versions. Jacki agreed that staff bonuses were a good idea. Bard Hill agreed and said the bonuses are warranted considering inflation. Bard wonders if it is possible to hire out temporary term employees, working in more of a consultant basis. Catherine also agreed with hiring another staff member and with the proposal of mid-year bonus.

JEFF CARR MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY JACKI MURPHY, TO RECOMMEND THE BOARD APPROVE THE PROPOSED FY23 MID-YEAR ADJUSTMENT BUDGET #3 AND UPWP. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Jeff Carr proposed we think about evaluating our current financial situation and provide a predictor for the next few years to ensure we do not overextend. Charlie agreed and said as an organization it is also about monitoring what is happening with legislature. We usually have a few months' notice when funding is going to be discontinued or added.

The financial portion of the meeting concluded at 6:43 PM and Jeff Carr excused himself.

6. Equity Update

Charlie asked Anne Nelson Stoner to provide an Equity Update. Anne Nelson said there is a community meeting scheduled for the evening of Thursday, January 5 at our CCRPC office. She is currently working on the CCRPC's internal equity statement, the South Burlington Climate Action Plan, and the Winooski Walk-Bike plan. She is conducting a lot of community outreach and getting to know many people. There were no questions from members.

7. Legislative Priorities:

Charlie referred members to the Policy Participation Topics document included with the packet. The list includes 14 separate topics to be discussed at the January Board meeting. Charlie reviewed the topics. Chris Shaw said item 4. Housing Bill including Permit Process Reform is a hot topic. Chris also said, in Massachusetts, there are state mandates that are meeting some resistance. In towns served by public transit, zoning for multi-family housing is encouraged for density purposes. This is not necessarily a model that works in Vermont currently, but it might be good to approach this subject. There is a point of emphasis we can make on maximizing areas of density.

Charlie said there has been talk about a state planning office that would serve to help guide policy. This is a long-term plan. As an alternative, Rep. Bongartz is asking RPCs to look at how to strengthen the role of regional plans in House Bill 5.

8. Chair Director Report
    a. Chittenden County Communications Union District.

    Charlie said the vote for a CUD passed in five municipalities: Essex, Essex Junction, Shelburne, South Burlington, and Williston. The organizational meeting of the CC CUD Board will be meeting held tomorrow. Charlie and Ann Janda will represent the CCRPC in this

endeavor and with the start up. We are not looking to stay on as staff. We are only helping with the start up.

b. Municipal Building Energy Resilience Grant Program
Charlie said there is over $40 million dollars in funding and the contract document Act 172 Grant Agreement was recently signed by Catherine. This is $200K worth of work for us to lend support over the next three years. There are some questions about the criteria to be considered as a cost burdened community and Chittenden County does not necessarily score well. Charlie is hoping there will be more discussion on how the factors are determined. He said the Legislature wanted to enable smaller towns will little staff to apply for this. Bard said the counties in Vermont are a hypothetical construct. If we cluster Winooski high school with Mt. Mansfield, the average doesn't describe either place very well. He wrestles with this, because within Chittenden County there are isolated cohorts of disadvantaged groups. He feels the overall data may not work because it masks the subtleties that exist. Charlie agreed.

9. Draft Board Agenda Charlie reviewed the January Board meeting agenda included with the packet with members. He reminded everyone there will need to be a public forum for the FY23-UPWP Mid-Year Adjustment and Budget.

10. Other Business: There was none.

11. Executive Session: None needed.

12. Adjournment: CHRIS SHAW MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MIKE O'BRIEN, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:08 PM. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Irvin Witham

FINAL