

1 CHITTENDEN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
2 JOINT EXECUTIVE AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
3 FINAL
4

5 DATE: Wednesday, April 5, 2023

6 TIME: 5:45 PM

7 PLACE: Remote Attendance via ZOOM
8

9 PRESENT: Catherine McMains, Chair Chris Shaw, Vice-Chair
10 Bard Hill, Secretary/Treasurer Michael Bissonette, at large <5000
11 Mike O'Brien, Past Chair Jacki Murphy, at large >5000
12 Jeff Carr, Finance (left 6:29)
13

14 OTHERS: Amy Bell, VTrans (left 6:41 PM) Matthew Arancio, VTrans (left 6:41 PM)
15

16 STAFF: Charlie Baker, Executive Director Taylor Newton, Planning Mgr.
17 Forest Cohen, Senior Business Mgr. Eleni Churchill, Transp. Prog. Mgr.
18 Mckenzie Spear, Business Office Assoc. Anne Nelson Stoner, Equity Mgr.
19 Emma Vaughn, Communications Mgr.
20

- 21 1. Call to Order, Attendance. The Executive Committee meeting was called to order by Catherine
22 McMains at 5:46 PM.
23
- 24 2. Changes to the Agenda, Members items. There were none.
25
- 26 3. Approval of the March 1, 2023, Joint Finance and Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
27 MIKE O'BRIEN MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY CHRIS SHAW, TO APPROVE THE MARCH 1, 2023,
28 JOINT EXECUTIVE AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED
29 UNANIMOUSLY.
30
- 31 4. Draft FY24 UPWP and Budget
32 a. FY24 UPWP Draft* -
33 Charlie noted our MPO funding has been increasing due to the infrastructure bill. The Draft
34 FY24 has approximately \$2.2 million worth of contractual work. Catherine noted that was a
35 lot more than when she was on UPWP Committee. Charlie said MPO funding had been
36 raised by about 30-40%. There is also the annual conversation with Chris Jolley about the
37 amount of "carry forward" dollars available. Catherine asked, will there be enough staff?
38 Charlie acknowledged there are more projects, and the nature of the projects will also
39 determine this. The staff is stretched and will continue to be stretched with this program.
40 He expects the \$2.2 million is a peak point due to the carry forward amount and will
41 probably level off. There are a lot of large regional projects that are unique. Charlie offered
42 a row-by-row on the spreadsheet if they wanted.
43
- 44 Eleni spoke about the UVM/VNRC application. Eleni said this was an application from
45 Richard Watts, UVM for FY23. The project was included in the FY23 program, but Richard
46 asked to defer to FY24; staff agreed. Before the FY24 UPWP process started, Richard
47 informed us that UVM will not be sponsoring the project and assured us that VNRC was

1 stepping in to provide the match. Staff reached out to VNRC to verify with no response until
2 after the second UPWP Committee meeting. At the second meeting, Chris Shaw and Michael
3 Bissonette were also there, the members decided not to award the application, pending
4 information from Richard Watts and Jack Hanson about whether this project has changed
5 long-term travel behavior of participants. This project mainly gave incentives to participants
6 not to use their private vehicles for six months. The UPWP Committee wanted to know what
7 happens after the six months have ended. Richard attended the third meeting and gave
8 some initial results. There still needs to be a long-term check. The Committee then said if we
9 received a revised VNRC application and a commitment to the 20% match, it would be okay
10 to include the project in the FY24 program. The RPC asked Richard to work with VNRC to
11 revise the application for the Executive Committee's consideration. We received an
12 application 2 days before the meeting that was not fully revised; there were only minor
13 updates such as adding Brian Shupe (VNRC) but most of everything else was the same, the
14 dates were wrong, and UVM was still listed as the fiscal agent. Staff feel this project will be
15 challenging to manage if they cannot organize the pertinent information at this early stage.
16 Mike O'Brien said he was glad to hear all of this because he was confused by the application.
17 Chris Shaw agreed that this was not complete. Staff recommended that sponsors should
18 reapply in FY25 with more details on long-term behavioral changes of participants of
19 previous phases of the project. Catherine said that it made a lot of sense.

20 CHRIS SHAW MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY JACKI MURPHY, TO DELETE TASK 2.3.3.9 (LINE
21 64) FROM THE DRAFT UPWP. MOTION CARRIED 5-0-1, WITH ONE ABSENTION FROM
22 MICHAEL BISSONETTE.

23 b. FY24 UPWP Budget Draft

24 Charlie shared an overview of the UPWP. There are a lot of yellow tasks, which is an
25 indication of pending tasks and conversations going on in Montpelier. The budget
26 adjustment act approved the rural assistance program—relatively small dollars to reach out
27 to small towns to help them receive federal funding. The Regional Planning Grant funding is
28 being used to provide \$100,000 this fiscal year to match MPO dollars. The draft budget has
29 RPG funding used for MPO match down to \$35,000 for FY24. Federal funds are going up
30 faster than the dues. Charlie also mentioned full formula funds for the regional planning
31 grant being requested of the legislature. The house appropriations committee
32 recommended an additional \$1.5 million statewide; this might turn \$150,000 - \$200,000 in
33 our budget, which is not reflected in the budget draft. This will make the match issue easier.
34

35 In natural resources, another application is the EPA for Brownfields. There are also projects
36 for a grant application to update the State's energy code and another energy efficiency
37 block grant (which Charlie believes we will receive). Multiple projects are pending for
38 natural resources and energy, and we believe most will be funded, so revenue is associated
39 with them. Charlie said in addition to MPO funds going up; the staffing level is in question
40 regarding how the RPC will manage all of this.

41
42 Charlie said he wanted to discuss the proposed 12.36% increase in the salary line. Charlie
43 noted he baked in an 8% salary budget increase, and the other 4% is for a new staff person.
44 Charlie has also been collecting data from other jurisdictions. Charlie shared a table with
45 other reference data. Some of the increases are only cost of living adjustments (COLA), and

1 others are not. Charlie said this does not significantly impact the RPC's bottom line. He
2 explained that whatever the billing rate is, that is what is billed to funders and provides our
3 revenue.

4
5 Jeff Carr said the reimbursement cost must be reasonable, and we want to retain people
6 with the salary increase. Jeff said they use Northeastern CPI, which covers less than 60% of
7 the household. ECI was used a while back which included benefits. He's trying to understand
8 why we didn't use that to track, and he deferred to the judgment of the management team.
9 He's concerned about overstaffing and being sustainable long term. Jeff noted that VTrans is
10 suitable for the RPC, but there is financial overhead; at some point, it will catch up to them
11 and the RPC. He wants to avoid committing to someone and later not being able to sustain
12 the position. Charlie agreed that Jeff made valid points. Catherine mentioned that she
13 thought it was reasonable. Jericho did a 3% increase mid-year and will do 5% in FY24. She
14 also said retirements coming will help with long term sustainability. She also mentioned
15 some of the responses from the staff survey that expressed concern about salaries.

16
17 Mike O'Brien noted that the 8% increase is at the top, and he's ok with it, but it could be
18 dropped to 7% due to municipalities. He would also like to know how the salaries fit into the
19 ranges of the studies.

20
21 Jacki said she was wondering if we are hiring an HR person to review compensation. Jacki
22 agrees that the increase makes sense but is curious if completing the compensation study
23 after is putting the cart before the horse. Charlie said he knows there is pressure, and we
24 are budgeting to keep up with the upward pressure on salaries. The compensation study at
25 the end of 2023 will determine how well we did in keeping up. Jacki referred to the
26 employee survey and noted that the staff was concerned about the salary range. She also
27 recognizes that there could be a high cost of losing seasoned staff and having to retrain.
28 Charlie said they had done very well retaining staff, and the first retirements will be
29 happening in FY25 and more in FY26 and FY27. If revenues go down, we won't replace staff;
30 if revenues continue, we can. Jeff noted that salaries would differ among experience. He
31 says we must be intelligent about comparisons; the population has coverage differences. He
32 reiterated his concern about making commitments that we can't keep. He does not want us
33 to be in the position of having to lay anyone off. Charlie said that is why he is not counting
34 on the \$1.5 million that is currently in the legislature's budget. Jeff noted the opportunity
35 from churning is helpful.

36
37 Amy Bell spoke about the transportation side of the budget. She wanted to make clear that
38 the RPC is a dedicated recipient of federal funding, and VTrans has no say in the allocations
39 of those funds. As a rule, transportation funds are much more reliable than those allocated
40 through the legislature. There could be federal changes, but they are less volatile than at the
41 general assembly level. Charlie agreed, as well as other committee members. Charlie noted
42 they have yet to set individual salary adjustments and will do that in June.

43
44 JEFF CARR MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MIKE O'BRIEN, TO FORWARD THE DRAFT FY24
45 UPWP AND BUDGET TO THE FULL BOARD FOR THE APRIL MEETING. MOTION CARRIED
46 UNANIMOUSLY.

47

1 5. Act 250 & 248 Applications

2 a. Lake Road Solar, LLC Charlotte; 45-day Notice of Application (#23-0916-AN)

3 Taylor shared his screen showing us a map of a 5 megawatts solar facility at the 45-day
4 notice stage in Charlotte. This was a revised project. A similar project was submitted at the
5 45-day notice stage approximately a year ago. The previous project proposed accessing
6 from the west; this is now being accessed from the park and ride in West Charlotte Village.
7 Encore will own the project with a power purchase agreement with Green Mountain Power.
8 In terms of natural resources, there have been a few flagged. The known constraints are
9 wetlands and endangered species. A few local constraints included wildlife habitat and the
10 RPC has been asked to work with the Town to address those constraints. Taylor said that
11 there were no red flags from staff and then asked for any questions.

12 Chris Shaw asked what impact the installation has. How viable is it to have fencing, and what
13 impact do we have on that? Taylor said fencing is required; they always are by the insurance
14 company.. Chris Shaw feels it counterintuitive for fencing to be there with wildlife habitats.
15 Catherine said in her experience, she had seen pushback with fencing. Chris Shaw asked if
16 this would be more of a local effort to adjust fencing location. Taylor confirmed that it
17 would be. Mike O'Brien asked if this is located next to the tracks and if and if there is a park
18 and ride. Amy Bell said it was not in use. It was previously a train station and is no longer a
19 park and ride and is owned by VTrans. She said they had not seen this project proposed yet.
20 There are no plans to reopen as a park-and-ride. There was vandalism in this area. Eleni
21 noted that this was not a part of their park and ride plan that they had just completed.

22 MIKE O'BRIEN MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY JACKI MURPHY, TO APPROVE THE SECTION
23 248 APPLICATION LETTER, AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

24
25 b. Barnabas Court, Colchester #4C1351

26 Taylor shared his screen, showing us a map of a 24-unit PUD in Colchester. To the south is
27 Bellwood Avenue in Mallets Bay, north of the drive-in, Church Road to the west, and Prim
28 Road to the east. From an RPC land use perspective, it is a suburban land use district, and
29 there is water and sewer there are no issues on the RPC's end. In addition, Taylor noted a
30 transportation analysis and there are no issues.

31 Jacki wanted to know about Bellwood's neighborhood and groundwater issues.. Taylor said
32 there are wetlands nearby with buffers from the development. He believes this in a higher
33 elevation part of that neighborhood. He said it is outside the wetlands. He said it is not
34 served by sewer but by water and fits in the density range and has no transportation issues.
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36

37 JACKI MURPHY MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY BARD HILL, TO APPROVE THE ACT 250
38 APPLICATION LETTER, AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
39

40 6. Board Development Committee Report

41 Mike O'Brien said he has talked to a few people about different positions. Currently, nothing is final.
42 He is confident it will be firmed up soon and plans to set a meeting for the Board Development
43 Committee to discuss.

44 7. Equity Update:

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1 Anne Nelson Stoner spoke about the Equity Advisory Committee meeting she facilitated last week to
2 get folks involved in a community network map. The hope is to get more detail as far as
3 marginalized voices; who works with these people, and what community spaces exist? This falls in
4 with engagement. This created a conversation about equity funds and what the process will look like
5 handling these funds. The idea of participatory budgeting came up and was discussed. She has a lot
6 of meetings with different municipalities and what she can do to help and be a resource. She is still
7 working on the mission statement and equity action plan. Also, the two interns from UVM are still
8 working on guides for engagement and residents' guides to the RPC. She also mentioned she met
9 with some members who would like to participate in the committee.

10
11 Chris Shaw thanked Anne Nelson for her work. Like the South Burlington council, he wondered if
12 they moved around to different schools to hold meetings in various neighborhoods. He asked if that
13 was a model for the RPC's future to help familiarize people within our communities. He noted there
14 are great meeting spots in Winooski and Burlington. Anne Nelson said that could be helpful and
15 could help increase participation. She feels that asking people to come to us creates barriers. The
16 goal behind network mapping is "how can the RPC go to residents of our communities and build
17 long-term relationships? Chris Shaw said it could be a more intimate approach and suggested the
18 possibility of 3-4 members from different committees and the board might meet with community
19 members where they are.

20
21 8. Chair/Executive Director Report

22 Charlie explained VTrans is finishing up recommendations for the Transportation Equity Framework.
23 He has been on the advisory committee and this work is going in the same direction as Anne Nelson.
24 They are also asking the same questions the RPC is. The state will be supportive of the work. Charlie
25 said there is crossover and mentioned the \$1.5 million in the draft budget. He wanted to thank the
26 CCRPC Board members for their support. The budget is now in Senate appropriations. He is
27 cautiously optimistic. The S.100 housing bill has been voted out of the Senate and landed in the
28 House today. VLCT has some concerns, and Mayor Weinberger would like more Act 250 changes
29 there. Charlie says that is a difficult ask now, as the legislative made an agreement not to change Act
30 250 this year and will discuss it in 2024. Charlie said it is trying to reduce the ability of NIMBYs to
31 influence permitting decisions, thereby reducing housing production. This should go through the
32 House committees by the end of April and be in a conference committee by early May. Charlie
33 believes it will move forward. One other bill of interest has some traction that would have 30% of
34 the land area of Vermont be preserved by 2030 and 50% by 2050.

35
36 Emma Vaughn reviewed the possible annual meeting options with everyone. The Maquam Barn and
37 Winery in Milton has a rental rate of \$1,000. Also, Sleepy Hollow Inn in Huntington has a rental rate
38 of \$500. Chris Shaw said he has been to Sleepy Hollow, which is rural. He has heard the Maquam is
39 spectacular. Charlie said they did some negotiation with Maquam, and they are giving us a break on
40 the rent. Jacki said Sleepy Hollow does not have an ideal road but could be better at that time of the
41 year. Jacki votes for Maquam as it is easier to get to. Bard said safe, accessible parking is important
42 and felt that we should take the deal if Milton made such a great deal. Catherine agreed with
43 everyone and chose Maquam. Michael Bissonnette said he is okay with either.

44
45 9. April Board Meeting draft agenda

46 Charlie reviewed the April Board Meeting draft agenda. Staff introductions with Ann Janda and
47 Melanie Needle, also warn a public hearing for UPWP. Charlie will provide a short review of the
48 UPWP and Budget and ask that a public hearing be warned for May. Chris Shaw asked about

1 anything that might happen with the legislature. Charlie said he will spend more time on that under
2 his report. Jacki asked about an update on the airport. Chris said that will still be worthwhile. Charlie
3 said he would make an inquiry. Chris Shaw is curious about what else will go on after a possible
4 name change. Charlie said the mayor mentioned it on Monday. Bard brought up the noise issues
5 and F35's and wants to know about sound monitoring and he feels as if they don't want to monitor.
6 He feels strongly about having facts that are accessible.

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9

10. Other Business There was none.

10 11. Executive Session: Charlie, Forest and Executive committee members moved to Executive session.
11 MIKE O'BRIEN MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY CHRIS SHAW, TO ENTER INTO AN EXECUTIVE
12 SESSION TO DISCUSS PERSONNEL ISSUES AT 7:07 PM.

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MIKE O'BRIEN MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY CHRIS SHAW, TO LEAVE THE EXECUTIVE SESSION AT
7:53 PM. THERE WAS NO ACTION TAKEN.

17 12. Adjournment: CHRIS SHAW MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY JACKI MURPHY, TO ADJOURN THE
18 MEETING AT 7:54 PM. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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Respectfully submitted,
Mckenzie Spear