



UVLSRPC Full Commission Meeting
Wednesday, April 23, 2014- 6:00 PM
10 Water Street, Lebanon, NH 03766
Approved June 18, 2014

Commissioners Present:

Thain Allan - Grantham
Dan Brand - Lyme
Kate Connolly - Hanover
Bob Crane – New London
Jonathan Edwards-Hanover
Sam Greene – Lyme
Mary Grenier-Lempster
Peter Guillette – Claremont
Jeff Kessler - Newport
Dan Kiley - Enfield
Larry LeClair - Lebanon

Ken Morley - Grafton County
Harry Pease – Orford
Thomas Rock – Claremont
Steve Schneider – Enfield
Linda Scofield - Wilmot
Aaron Simpson -Sunapee
Bill Trought - Dorchester
Josh Trow - Sunapee
Richard Wahrlich - Claremont

Others Attending:

Carol Miller - Guest
Bernie Folta – Public Hearing
Jeremy Katz – Public Hearing
Chris Courtemanche – Staff
Nate Miller – Staff
Adam Ricker - Staff
Rachel Ruppel -Staff

1. Call to Order

Chair Larry LeClair called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

2. Regional Broadband Plan Public Hearing:

Rachel Ruppel provided an overview of the draft Regional Broadband Plan, noting that there are four goals for broadband development in the region:

1. Provide affordable 10 Mbps broadband service, robust enough to support telework and tele-education to all areas of the region.
2. Continue building “Gigabit Communities.”
3. Encourage a marketplace of competitive, innovative providers.
4. Work towards parity in broadband service availability across rural regions, the downtowns and village centers of our region and metropolitan areas in the Northeast.

Rachel Ruppel noted that the plan identifies six primary barriers to broadband development in the region, including low population density throughout the region, low return on investment for wired expansion, hilly terrain that inhibits wireless expansion, limited financing and funding sources, complexities in utility pole attachments, and state-level leadership that is lacking compared to other northern New England States.

Rachel Ruppel continued, noting the five priority actions identified in the draft Regional Broadband Plan, including:

- Supporting reform of the federal Connect America Fund.
- Passing state legislation that promotes new options for broadband financing.
- Reforming state legislation and policy governing utility pole attachments.
- Providing technical assistance to municipalities to update wireless telecom ordinances.

- Supporting inter-municipal or regional coordination on broadband expansion efforts.

Chairman Larry LeClair opened the public hearing and instructed the audience to announce themselves, their town/city of residence, and their affiliation. Chairman LeClair asked that individual comments be limited to 3 minutes. Rachel Ruppel advised that questions and comments would be addressed in writing via a responsiveness document to be published in late June/July.

- Jonathan Edwards of the Town of Hanover noted that the maps are hard to read at scale.
- Kate Connolly of the Town of Hanover noted the NH Municipal Association is considering legislation regarding pole attachments, which is a unique problem in New Hampshire.
- Linda Scofield of the Town of Wilmot noted that the poles that supply her house are owned by someone else, and that she can understand the confusion.
- Mary Grenier of the Town of Lempster noted that FairPoint has a huge presence in the region and that she has found their service to be good.
- Jeff Kessler of the Town of Newport that on page 12 of the plan, the levels of broadband service are completely inadequate for current needs. He would like to see this removed from the report. Jeff also noted that Newport is still relying on copper, outdated infrastructure and has minimal quality of connection service.
- Bernie Folta of the City of Claremont noted that on page 29, he would like to see more data about the cost of service. It is hard to truly know costs with bundling packages and cell service beyond the scope of the plan. Bernie noted that, presumably, competition lowers costs.
- Jonathan Edwards of the Town of Hanover noted a recent report detailing that \$89/month is the average cost.
- Jeremy Katz, a resident of the City of Lebanon, advised that he had prior involvement in the telecommunications industry and noted that the Plan looks similar to a report completed in 2002.

Chairman Larry LeClair closed the public hearing and thanked those in attendance for participating.

3. Approval of Minutes:

Jeff Kessler move to approve the minutes as submitted. Peter Guillette seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

4. New Contracts:

Nate Miller reported that we have two new contracts: 1) Town of Orford Capital Facilities Plan (\$17,360); and 2) The Walk and Bike in Eastman Initiative (\$22,740). Aaron Simpson questioned why the Commission is assisting Eastman since they are a private community. After some discussion, it was noted that we have provided assistance to Eastman Community Association for years and it is important work. **Aaron Simpson moved to authorize the Executive Director, Nate Miller, to apply for, accept and expend funds, and to sign all documents related to the Town of Orford Long-Range Community Facilities Plan project. Jeff Kessler seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Kate Connolly moved to authorize the Executive Director, Nate Miller, to apply for, accept and expend funds, and to sign all documents related to The Walk and Bike in Eastman project. Thain Allan seconded the motion and the motion passed with Aaron Simpson abstaining.**

5. New Grant Applications:

Nate Miller provided Commissioners with an overview of several new grant applications under development, including: 1) FTA Section 531(f) Interstate 89 Transit Feasibility Study; 2) EPA Healthy Communities; 3) U.S. DOT TIGER – Regional Transportation Infrastructure Resiliency Plan. **Kate Connolly moved to authorize the Executive Director, Nate Miller, to apply for, accept and expend funds, and to sign all documents related to these grants. Aaron Simpson seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

6. UVLSRPC Committee Reports:

Executive Committee

FY 2015 Meeting Dates: Larry LeClair noted that meetings have been changed to provide financial statements that are more current to the full Commission.

Staffing Update: Nate Miller reported that Meghan Butts has been hired to replace Quinn Molloy as a full-time temporary GIS/Assistant Planner.

Finance Committee

Review of Financial Statement - Thain Allan reported on the February income statement noting that the commission had a slight operating loss, but we are positive for the year-to-date.

Preliminary FY2015 Budget Review - Nate Miller provided the following overview of the preliminary FY 2015 budget:

- FY 2015 will see the end of a number of multi-year planning projects and programs.
- The Commission's focus needs to shift to developing new projects and diversifying revenue streams.
- Staff projection for FY 2015: Executive Director; Finance Manager; Administrative Assistant; five full-time Planning staff; and one part-time Planner. The Assistant Planner/GIS Technician position is temporary, but could be made permanent depending on revenues. Similarly, the open planner position will remain open depending on revenues.
- Health Insurance costs are increasing 2.7%.
- Short-term Disability costs are increasing 23%.
- Long-term Disability and Life Insurance costs are staying level.
- Retirement match is staying level.
- UVLSRPC placed a Request for Proposals for General Liability, Workers Compensation, and Unemployment Insurance, which is likely to result in a significant costs savings for those expense categories.
- Expenses – Project Consultants/Contractors include our household hazardous waste hauler, transit agencies providing elderly and disabled transit services under the FTA Section 5310 program, the Upper Valley Trails Alliance (for the Walk/Bike in Eastman Project), and CRJC Local River Subcommittee support.
- Expenses – Professional fees include our audit contract with Melanson & Heath, IT services, and legal fees for contract reviews.
- Expenses – Occupancy, Office, and Business – Rent is assumed to increase 2.5%, and the office expenses have been reorganized in budget for clarity. Most office expenses are projected to stay level or modestly decrease. External dues/memberships are projected to modestly increase.
- Revenues have been categorized in three tiers – Tier 1 – confirmed or pending projects; Tier 2 – proposals/potential projects; Tier 3 – potential projects in conceptual stage.

Nate Miller noted that, with new projects and programs under development, the revenue picture is likely to change significantly between now and the Annual Meeting in June.

Personnel Committee

- Emergency Procedures/Vehicle Policy – Nate Miller presented the updated policies to the Commission for approval. **Thain Allan moved to approve the vehicle policy. Aaron Simpson seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Thain Allan moved to approve the Emergency Procedures policy amending page 3 to read “Any fatality or intentional injury on the premises will be immediately communicated via 911, and the scene shall be preserved until they arrive”. Peter Guillette seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

7. Reports from Partner Organizations

- Peter Guillette (NHARPC) noted that the NH Association of Regional Planning Commissions coordinates the activities of the RPC's on a statewide basis by providing information and technical assistance to its members and other groups and organizations. It maintains strategic partnerships with various state and federal agencies and develops planning policies, programs, legislative positions, responses to topical issues, and special projects and initiatives working on behalf of its member commissions and, by extension, the member cities and towns across New Hampshire.

Peter also noted that up to two commissioners from each regional planning commission may be appointed to serve on the Board of Directors, and advised that NHARPC has a Legislative Consultant, Nancy Johnson who attends legislative hearings and provides reports on a monthly basis.

The NHARPC Annual Meeting is scheduled for June 23, 2014 at the Local Government Center in Concord, NH.

- Sam Greene (UVHC) noted that the Upper Valley Housing Coalition provides information to communities and neighborhoods regarding the need for housing and proposes strategies to increase the housing supply. Sam reported that at their last meeting, they have been working on data gathering, values across the region, senior housing and re-examining their priorities. Sam noted that the UVHC is convening focus groups with housing developers, and asked that Commissioners forward Nate Miller the names of any developers that might be interested in participating.
- Jonathan Edwards (NH Rail Transit Authority) reported that the Authority has taken a formal position in support of including a stop in Claremont in the Northern New England Intercity Rail Initiative feasibility study. Jonathan also noted that the Authority remains hard at work in evaluating the proposed Capital Corridor that would link MBTA service with Nashua, Manchester, and Concord.

8. Nominating Committee – Larry LeClair noted that since Julie Magnuson could not serve on the committee, we would need one more volunteer. Larry LeClair volunteered. **Thain Allan moved to appoint Larry LeClair to serve on the Nominating Committee. Jeff Kessler seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

9. Executive Director's Report -

- Nate Miller reported that Rachel Ruppel started working for the city of Lebanon through a circuit rider agreement in March and is doing a great job.
- Mike McCrory is currently working 2 days a week for the City of Claremont through a circuit rider agreement. Peter Guillette noted that the City is very impressed with Mike work.
- Adam Ricker has been working with Rachel on the draft Regional Broadband Plan and will be transitioning to more into transportation planning.
- Vickie Davis and Pat Croker have been assisting in writing the new grant proposals.
- Yutian Zhang and Chris Courtemanche have been working to refine the way payables are recorded and processed internally. Nate Miller noted that it is National Administrative Professionals Day, and thanked Chris Courtemanche for all she does for the Commission.

10. Commissioner Town/City Announcements:

- Peter Guillette reported that the Stevens High School renovation project is proceeding on schedule.
- Mary Grenier reported that she visited the biomass project in Unity and was very impressed.
- Sam Greene reported that the Lyme school addition has started and should be completed by

September 1st.

- Jeff Kessler noted that Newport finally has an exit sign on Interstate 89 southbound, and thanked Nate Miller for his assistance in that process.
- Larry LeClair reported that the Lebanon Zoning Board approved a variance to James W. Campion to allow the construction of a liquid natural gas vaporization facility, which would include bulk liquid storage of gas, (potentially) distribution of the product by pipeline, and installation of a vehicle refueling station.

11. Adjournment: Ken Morley moved to adjourn seconded by Jeff Kessler at 8:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Chris Courtemanche, UVLSRPC Administrative Assistant