

Bennington County Regional Commission

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

January 29, 2019
8:30 AM
West Mountain Inn – Arlington, VT

MINUTES

Present: Suzanne dePeyster, Cinda Morse, John LaVecchia, Janet Hurley, Jim Sullivan (Director)

1. Sullivan reviewed the mid-year budget revision. A few key points and explanations:

Revenues

- The USDA Grant (The Windham Region RDC, BDCC, is the actual grantee) requires us to contribute staff time as match prior to receiving any revenues. We won't make the full match so there will be no revenues.
- The VT DOL Internship grant is new; grant funds will be used to pay BDCC for support (\$5,000) and to pay an employee or contractor (\$20,000) to do the work in our region. It is likely that we will go with a part-time employee working through the Lightning Jar.
- The Lightning Jar Board decided to terminate the full-time Director position after half a year so that budget amount is reduced by 50% (also resulted in termination of one BCRC employee – reduced staff cost). As noted above, we may be working with the LJ Board to hire a new part-time staff person.
- As agreed by the Executive Committee at our previous meeting, the BCRC agreed to extend our relationship with ACT and the DFC grant thru March, resulting in additional grant revenues (and continued staff expense).
- The VISTA program is down from three to two people this year, so the SVHC grant to BCRC was reduced accordingly. Additional funds were added to support VISTA programming.
- The BCRC received a grant to complete a study of a potential bikepath between Bennington and Williamstown (the "Trolley Line Trail"). We expect to draw about \$10,000 from that grant this fiscal year.

Expenses

- One staff position (Marrocco) terminated as of January 1. One staff position (Muniere) extended through March. All personnel costs adjusted accordingly.
- Holiday Bonus adjusted slightly to reflect positive position at mid-year.
- Health Insurance costs adjusted based on personnel changes and actual rate increases. One employee just began using the BCRC plan (two-person). Health care costs and options will have to be looked at closely when developing the FY 20 budget.

- We are going ahead with transitioning all files to a cloud-based system so require higher internet speeds – planning to switch internet/phone to Comcast Business.
- Slight change to BCSWA contractors – based on agreement with SW Outreach contractor.
- Brownfields hazardous sites contractor spending running ahead of schedule (will need to pick up some petroleum sites work).
- Other expense increases are pass-thrus, offsetting additional revenue.

Overall

- Forecast is still for a surplus this year, but that depends on our ability to spend down all of our grants with our lower indirect rate. Stacey is working with financial staff at the State to revise our indirect rate methodology to minimize this issue in the future.

Motion (Morse): Adopt the amended budget as presented (copy attached). Second (LaVecchia). Passed unanimously.

2. The RDC (BCIC) Board has elected its five representatives to the BCRC (first meeting will be in March) and they will, in turn, designate two members to serve on the BCRC Executive Committee. It appears that those two people will be Dimitri Garder and James Salerno. We'll now have seven members and Bill Colvin, our economic development director, should participate in future meetings as well – so we may often have nine people in attendance. Should have a regular schedule and consistent agenda topics: planning program report, economic development program report, financial report, legal/regulatory issues, and new business, for example. Discussed a new meeting schedule/location. It was noted that Friday mornings appear best for the economic development representatives. Sullivan will survey all of the members of the executive committee and look for a suitable location in the Arlington area.
3. Winhall, Readsboro, and Searsburg joined the Windham Regional Commission (WRC) instead of the BCRC many years ago and have remained with the WRC ever since. Searsburg is a member of our regional solid waste alliance and we've done some emergency management work with/for Winhall in recent years, but otherwise we have little direct contact with them. It was noted that Winhall, in particular, is strongly involved with the Northshire community – one example is education, where secondary students attend Burr and Burton Academy in Manchester. The committee discussed organizing meetings (one north and one south) where we would invite RPC commissioners and town officials from Winhall (north) and Readsboro and Searsburg (south) as well as commissioners and local officials from neighboring towns in our region to meet and talk about common concerns and issues or projects where there may be some inter-town interest. Those discussions may include a discussion of RPC membership.
4. The committee discussed inconsistent municipal representation on the commission and how to encourage more active involvement. Sullivan will survey all of the Vermont RPCs to get an idea of things like: number of reps per municipality, role of the full commission vs. executive committee, and other organizational issues. The conversation will be continued after reviewing those findings.

Meeting adjourned at 10:25 AM
Respectfully submitted by James Sullivan