

Bennington County Regional Commission

Executive Committee

MINUTES

April 12, 2018

Chauncey's Restaurant – Arlington, VT

Present: Janet Hurley, Meg Cottam, Dan Monks, Suzanne dePeyster, John LaVecchia
Jim Sullivan, Director

1. Mid-Year Financial Report

The mid-year financial report was reviewed. Both expenses and revenues are running behind projections, but should be largely in line by the end of June. Lower than expected spending in the Solid Waste program has resulted in significant variances from budget as have lags in start dates on some projects. The implications of failing to be awarded the regional cultural plan municipal planning grant was discussed. Sullivan will provide an update and projections after the third quarter financial report is completed and in anticipation of developing the FY 19 budget.

2. BCRC Financial Audit Proposals

BCRC's financial director, Stacey Eggsware, prepared an RFP for audit services as the organization has not gone out to bid for these services for several years. Two firms responded with proposals: Love, Cody & Company and Pieciak & Company. Both firms are well-regarded and have solid references. Love, Cody has done the BCRC audits for the past several years, we have been satisfied with their work, and their proposed cost was less than Pieciak's. Sullivan stated that he and Eggsware felt that the selection should be left to the executive committee to guard against any perceived conflict of interest. After some discussion, Cottam moved to accept the Love, Cody & Company proposal and enter into a three-year agreement with that firm. Second by LaVecchia. Passed unanimously.

3. BCRC Personnel Policy

The proposed Personnel Policy that was distributed to committee members via email was discussed. Sullivan stated that he and Eggsware decided to consult with an HR professional to be sure that the policies were consistent with state and federal requirements and reflected generally accepted practices. After much review and discussion, the proposed document was completed. There are no major changes to procedures or benefits, but much more detail in certain areas and refinements in others. Sullivan raised one issue that came up when discussing the policies with staff: vacation benefits. Some felt only having just over two weeks of vacation for the first five full years of employment was a bit too conservative and might impact hiring and retention. Sullivan compared BCRC's vacation time benefits with those of the rest of the RPCs in

Vermont and determined that most do offer more time off earlier in an employee's tenure. Based on those reviews, the executive committee suggested the following vacation policy:

- 0-2 years: 12 days
- 3-8 years: 18 days
- 8+ years: 24 days

After some further discussion, dePeyster moved to adopt the Personnel Policies with the vacation time change as noted above. Second by Monks. Passed unanimously.

4. BCRC Comprehensive Insurance Coverage

Quotes for new/extended insurance coverage were obtained from Wills/Richards and VLCT. Existing coverage is primarily through Wills/Richards, with additional coverage for directors and officers, employment practices, and professional liability added. A new coverage through VLCT would replace all existing coverages and would include the D&O, EP, and PL coverages. Although the quote from VLCT was approximately \$1,700 higher than the combined total cost of existing and new insurance through other providers, including Wills/Richards, the consensus of the Board was that the benefits of working through VLCT – experience working with municipalities, reliable and prompt support, and discounts for other VLCT services – made it reasonable to switch coverages to VLCT. Motion (Monks): Move all BCRC insurance coverage to VLCT through their PACIF program. Second by LaVecchia. Passed unanimously.

5. Allco/PLH Lawsuit

Sullivan provided an update on filings and motions in the lawsuit involving preparation and adoption of the Bennington Town Energy Plan. There have been no decisions from the court as yet. BCRC's attorney has filed a motion to dismiss the complaint. The committee will be updated as events unfold.

6. BCRC Information Technology Systems

Sullivan provided an update on the process of reviewing proposals from various consultants to assist with migrating BCRC files to a Sharepoint cloud server and to upgrade email and other systems. GIS data and licenses will remain on the local server and financial programs and data will remain local as well. It is likely that the migration will cost less than \$5,000 and it is hoped that ongoing costs will be slightly lowered after that point, with improved security and ease of access to files for all staff. A decision will be made as to a consultant and services in the near future.

7. Annual Meeting

The upcoming annual meeting at the West Mountain Inn (May 17) was discussed. Sullivan will get a first round of invitations out soon. Everyone agreed that the Bongartz Award should go to Rob Woolmington this year; recommend to Seth Bongartz next year (see if we can have the event at Hildene in 2019).

8. Other Business

Sullivan provided updates on the Putnam Redevelopment project and possible future BCRC office relocation. It was noted that the BCIC board will be meeting to discuss its future direction and a possible name change. Everyone agreed that the BCRC executive committee should meet with their counterparts at BCIC at least once per year. Sullivan will communicate that request.

Hurley gave an update on the proposed comprehensive zoning revision being considered in Manchester. No decision yet and there are some competing groups.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 AM.

Respectfully submitted: Jim Sullivan 4-12-2018