*Bennington County Regional Commission*

**Executive Committee**

June 28, 2017

8:30 AM

Chauncey’s Restaurant – Arlington, VT

Present: Suzanne dePeyster, Janet Hurley, Meg Cottam

Jim Sullivan (Director)

I. Data Storage

Sullivan reviewed data storage options discussed with RCS Consulting and research into Cloud storage. Hurley suggested that Sullivan talk with John O’Keefe as the Town of Manchester recently implemented some changes for their file backup.

II. Financials – FY 2017

The Committee reviewed third quarter financial reports at the previous meeting; year-end reports will be available in July. Sullivan reported two issues affecting the projected year-end balance sheet have emerged recently: a shift in the due date for some deliverables and a resulting shift in some expected revenue (about $6,000) into FY ’18, and a finding by USDA Rural Development that Northshire Grows was not eligible to receive any funding through the food system planning grant (meaning that approximately $6,000 will be deducted from BCRC’s final invoices). The determination was based on NG’s status as a “benefiting business,” thereby making it ineligible to receive grant funds for a project that would benefit the business. Sullivan is following up on both items, will attempt to recoup some or all of the USDA funds, and will report back at the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

III. FY 2018 Work Program

The Executive Committee reviewed the proposed BCRC FY 2018 comprehensive work program. Among items discussed in some detail were the DFC grant program and its ultimate home, the possible cultural planning grant (Hurley suggested contacting Todd Nebraska and the MBA for Northshire input), the new Brownfields grant, and the level of work associated with the BCIC cooperative agreement. Upon a motion by Cottam and a second by dePeyster, the work program was approved as presented.

IV. Budget

The proposed FY 2018 budget was reviewed. It projects revenues of approximately $1.415 million and expenses of approximately $1.385 million. Members of the Executive Committee strongly voiced their concern that BCIC should pay BCRC significantly more for the work being done, something likely to require BCIC to sell, or otherwise disengage from, its land in the Maneely Business Park in Bennington. The Committee also emphasized that BCIC needs to begin a serious rebranding effort, including replacing its name (and logo) with something more regional and broadly directed toward economic development. That effort will need to begin immediately if BCRC is to work on its behalf to raise additional funds from towns and villages in the region. Costs associated with updating the BCRC website and transitioning maintenance to in-house staff were discussed. Hurley felt there would be benefit in contracting with an IT expert to assist with technical and administrative issues that inevitably arise; she suggested contacting Riley Moore in Manchester, and it is possible that Scott Printz (current website manager) might be willing to help in this more limited capacity.

Motion (dePeyster) to approve the FY 2018 BCRC budget as presented. Second by Cottam. Passed unanimously.

V. Request for “Preferred Site” Letter from Southshire Community Solar

The request is for the BCRC to join the Town of Shaftsbury in identifying the Merrow property on Buck Hill Road in Shaftsbury as a “preferred site” per Public Service Board Rule 5.100 related to net-metering systems. It was noted that the Town Select Board and Planning Commission already have issued letters supporting the designation, that the project involves a relatively small (76.6 KW) addition to an existing community solar project, and that there are no critical or secondary environmental resources identified in the regional energy plan that would be impacted. The site is not ideally situated for solar gain, but there are no impediments to reasonably good access to solar energy. The Committee felt that, ideally, preferred sites should derive from a local planning process rather than in response to a request from a developer, but felt that it would be appropriate to write a letter in support of this preferred site designation, making it clear that the key factors are the support from the municipality and the absence of any significant environmental impacts. In the future, it is expected that “preferred site” designations will derive from the local planning process. Motion (dePeyster): Submit a letter in support of the “preferred site” designation for the Merrow property at 697 Buck Hill Road in Shaftsbury. Second by Cottam. Passed unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:15 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

James Sullivan, Director