

ADDISON COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
February 23, 2022

The Addison County Regional Planning Commission’s Executive Board held its monthly meeting in a hybrid fashion, at its offices and via Google meet with Chair, Stephen Pilcher presiding.

ROLL CALL

Middlebury

Monkton Stephen Plicher
 Wendy Sue Harper

Panton Jamie Dayton

Ripton Jeremy Grip

Vergennes Shannon Haggett
 Cheryl Brinkman

STAFF: Adam Lougee, Director

Stephen opened the meeting at 6:31 p.m.

MINUTES

Minutes: Shannon Haggett moved to adopt the January 26, 2022 minutes. Wendy Sue Harper seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

TREASURER’S REPORT

Adam delivered the Treasurer’s Report through the month of January. He noted that cash on hand as of January 31st remained strong, up significantly from last year because of two new DHCD programs that paid cash upfront. Receivables also remain high. He reported that year to date, revenues exceed expenses by more than \$200,000. However, Adam noted that a lot of those funds constitute prepaid revenues. When we remove those amounts, revenues are actually even with expenses. Adam noted that after last month's meeting he and April took a long dive into the financials and realized that we had not accounted for the matching dollars that we had used. Including those matching dollars brings us back to even. Adam reviewed the budget in detail with the Executive Board. **Cheryl Brinkman moved to accept the Treasurer’s Report as presented. Shannon Haggett seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Act 250/248, Housing, Natural Resources, Local Government, and Economic Development

Committees: Adam stated that the committees noted above have not met since prior to the last Full Commission meeting.

Energy: Jeremy Grip reported the Energy Committee had met earlier this month to discuss projects that it would pursue with Maddi and had decided to focus on weatherization. It meets again in early March. Yesterday Maddi released the scorecards she had created for each town tracking their energy usage to show the progress each town and the region was making towards being 90% renewable by 2050.

Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC): Shannon noted the TAC met in February. VTrans presented their plans for repairing and reopening Route 125 in Addison by June. Mike gave the committee an update on the TAC Grants, the PELS study in Vergennes and surrounding communities and the downtown grants.

Steve Pilcher noted that radar signs for Town roads only cost about \$4,000 and are therefore within the reach of many town road budgets.

Under Housing, Adam noted that Katie would be sending all municipalities and statutory parties copies of the Regional Plan, amended to include the new Population and Housing section very soon.

OLD BUSINESS

ARPA and other State Recovery Funding (Flood Resiliency, Housing, Broadband): The Executive Board discussed the American Recovery Plan money municipalities in the Region have received. Adam noted that ACRPC had received funding to support municipalities and to help them navigate the rules regarding how to spend their own funding. Andrew continues to work on outreach to towns. The big news is that the Treasury issued its final rules on January 6th. Those rules contain a large exemption for municipalities that received less than \$10M from the program. The exemption affects every town in Vermont, except Burlington. All will be able to use their ARPA funding to replace the presumed amount of up to \$10M as lost revenue. In essence, towns will be able to spend their allocation on almost any function of government. Therefore, they will have a lot more flexibility on how to spend their money. Adam noted he hoped most towns would continue to focus on transformational changes.

Yesterday ACRPC co-hosted a “Fundors Forum” for the Towns of Addison, Monkton, Salisbury and Whiting to try to help them find/create a funding stack for the repair and rehabilitation of their town halls to support new economic development opportunities within their communities.

Andrew submitted 3 flood resilience grants to replace a culvert and clean debris from a collapsed bridge from Lewis Creek and to perform some planning work with Lewis Creek Association.

Last month ACRPC hosted a webinar on creating wastewater solutions for small villages to allow towns to create housing. ACRPC is also working with Saint Stephen’s church and

ACCT to create a program to increase accessory dwelling unit construction in the region.

ACRPC continues to support the work of Maple Broadband. I serve as clerk and de facto member of the Executive Committee, April keeps their books and John helps them with mapping and displaying spatial information.

New ACRPC Funding (Bylaws, Energy, CWSP, CEDS, Brownfields): Adam noted that ACRPC worked with four member towns to apply for new funding to revise bylaws to promote housing development, three of the four received funding.

Maddi continues to work on Energy issues. She has completed good summaries of both the Comprehensive Energy Plan and the Climate Council's Action Plan. She has also created and distributed ACRPC's annual scorecard on how our member towns are doing toward meeting their energy conservation goals. Lastly, she continues to work with the energy committee on project options, focusing on weatherization projects.

Mike continues to work to set up the infrastructure necessary to create the Clean Water Service Provider and Basin Water Quality Council systems necessary for that program to begin awarding grants in July, 2022.

John is working on drafting both the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for our region and our regional economic development section of our plan.

Adam noted that he and Andrew are working to restart the region's brownfields program with the \$100,000 grant ACRPC received from the Agency of Commerce. Andrew is advertising, and creating an inventory of possible assessment sites. We have inquiries from 2 potential sites.

Draft Financial Policy: Adam noted that he had sent a draft financial policy out with the agenda. He noted that the document is still very much a draft, but that it will constitute the structure of the policy he will be asking the Executive Board to adopt. **Adam will bring a much more final draft back next month.**

Other: Adam noted that Andrew will be making a nice presentation to the Panton Town meeting on the BRIC grant that ACRPC and GMP secured to study enlarging the electric island that exists in Panton and can be maintained should the main grid go down.

ACRPC still needs to change the signers on its Vanguard accounts. **Adam will send the paperwork to Ross and Steve and work to make the changes necessary to update the paperwork.**

NEW BUSINESS

Nominating Committee: Adam reminded the Executive Board that at the February full Commission he included an agenda item requesting that commission members volunteer to serve on the Nominating Committee for officers. At its February Committee meeting, the Executive Committee will consider those requests as it creates a slate to propose for vote at the March Full

Commission meeting. Adam noted that Wendy Sue Harper had volunteered to serve on the committee at our last executive Board meeting and that Tim Davis had volunteered to serve on the nominating Committee at the Full Commission meeting. Otherwise, Adam did not know of any other volunteers. No members of the Executive Board had received any other interest. We generally have a committee of three individuals. After some discussion, Cheryl Brinkman also volunteered to serve on the nominating committee. The Executive Board voted unanimously to recommend the following commission members to serve as members of the nominating Committee:

Wendy Sue Harper (Leaving the Executive Board)
Tim Davis
Cheryl Brinkman (Still eligible for the Executive Board)

Budget Amendment to Support ACEDC grant-writer: Adam recommended that ACRPC amend its budget to expend \$15,000 of its current surplus to support a grant writing position at the Addison County Economic Development Corporation. Adam noted that we already work jointly with ACEDC on a number of things. With all of the federal money available, the region can use grant writers. Funding ¼ of a position with access to the skills of that position is a good financial arrangement for ACRPC. After some discussion the Executive Board supported the proposed budget amendment and voted to bring it to the full Commission for approval at the next meeting.

Exchange St Sidewalk - Bortell Property Adam explained that ACRPC currently acts as the municipal project manager for the Town of Middlebury on this project. It has been delayed in right of way for a long time. The biggest holdup is the Bortell property at 34 Exchange St. Adam noted the property is tied up in the court system both in the probate court and is subject to a foreclosure. The Executor will not release the easement for the sidewalk on the property until he fixes the entire issue. Adam has asked if the town of Middlebury will buy the property or if ACCT will buy the property. Neither could or wanted to within a quick time frame. Adam disclosed to the executive board that he might be interested in buying it himself as an investment and asked them if they deemed there to be any conflict. After discussion the Board concluded no conflict existed.

Annual Meeting/Bertha Hanson Award/Speaker: Adam noted our annual meeting is in May. He asked the Board how they felt about holding an in person dinner. The board tentatively approved a more formal and in person event, keeping an eye on the Covid climate. They stated they would be flexible, and could support holding the meeting in May or June. They recommended that Adam ask the speaker from our last event, which we postponed, if he would still be willing to speak. They recommended the outdoor space at Tourterelle if it is available and asked Adam to solicit new nominations for the Bertha Hanson award.

Other: Shannon Haggett noted that the legislative bodies of Vergennes and Ferrisburgh had asked Adam to help facilitate a discussion that they wish to engage in regarding certain sensitive community issues.

Jeremy Grip noted that he had a Starlink internet system installed at his house in Ripton. He states he received 100MB download speeds and between 8-20MB upload speeds with some

intermittent interruption in service.

MEMBER CONCERNS AND INFORMATION

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Shannon Haggett moved to adjourn. All approved and the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Adam Lougee