Bennington County Regional Commission

 **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES**

**August 28, 2020**

**8:30 AM**

**BCRC Offices - 111 South Street, Bennington**

**and Via ZOOM**

Present: Janet Hurley, John LaVecchia, Suzanne dePeyster, Cinda Morse, Dan Monks,

Dimitri Garder, James Salerno / BCRC Staff: Jim Sullivan, Bill Colvin

The meeting was called to order, after a short scramble to locate the Zoom link, at 8:35 AM.

I. Minutes of June 26 Meeting

Motion to approve the Minutes of the June Executive Committee meeting by Morse. Second by LaVecchia. Passed unanimously.

II. Review and Approval of Records Retention Policy

After reviewing the intent and contents of the proposed policy, Hurley suggested that Regional Plans be added to the list of documents that should be retained permanently. Also noted that certain references could be clarified (e.g., “your state” in 5(d) could become “Vermont”). With the change regarding addition of Regional Plans to the list of retained records, Monks moved to approve the Records Retention Policy; Morse seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

III. FY 2020 Year-End Financial Report

 The final year-end financial report for the BCRC was reviewed. The Commission realized net income of just over $11,000 for the year ending June 30. Sullivan reviewed items that were significantly over or under budget and provided some context for issues that may face the Commission in FY 21 – much of which will depend on the current legislative session. Particular note made of the extra spending in the salaries category, reflecting the previously agreed to decision to correct a longstanding problem with payroll timing. Also, noted were the savings that will be realized with the new office space (beginning in January) as well as concerns over certain program spending, such as Brownfields (low spending in FY 2020, picking up now). The financial audit begins next week and an audit report will be provided to the Executive Committee as soon as it is available.

IV. Program Updates

Colvin gave an overview of RDC work, particularly that related to support for businesses in understanding and accessing COVID relief funding. Colvin also reviewed various grants received/being pursued: technical assistance grant through the Department of Economic Development, support for the Southern Vermont CUD (broadband), US EDA grant proposals with other RDCs and BDCC in particular, and a municipal planning grant (combined with a DEC brownfields grant) to look at reuse of the Energizer plant in Bennington.

Sullivan provided a brief overview of planning programs, including ongoing transportation improvement projects, a planned scoping project in Dorset, and a potential village center planning study (MPG project) in Manchester Village.

The Committee discussed the potential impact of the apparent movement of people from urban areas to southern Vermont. Benefits of population growth, workforce expansion, new business creation, and diversification were noted along with challenges related to availability of housing and land use planning concerns such as adequacy of infrastructure in village centers to support growth in these areas. Agreed that there needs to be clarity in BCRC policies and priorities and how they relate to this new opportunity across various programs.

V. Office Relocation

 Sullivan noted that office relocation plans are on schedule. Draft lease received – need to fix start date and provide for new carpet in the new office space. Cost is reasonable and has caps to control future increases. Three + two term. When a final proposal is available, will be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval – probably at the October meeting (intent is to make the move in December).

VI. Topics for October Meeting

* Budget Update
* Executive Director annual evaluation
* Succession planning
* Review of BCRC policies related to discrimination

VII. Other Business and Adjourn

Following a brief discussion of a personnel issue, the meeting was adjourned at 9:53 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Sullivan

8-28-2020