Bennington County Regional Commission

 **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES**

**October 22, 2021 - 8:30 AM**

**(Meeting Held via ZOOM)**

Present: Janet Hurley, Dan Monks, John LaVecchia, Dimitri Garder, Cinda Morse

Jim Sullivan (Director), Bill Colvin (Assistant Director – joined for the program updates section of the meeting)

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 AM.

* Minutes: August 27, 2021

Motion to approve Minutes by LaVecchia, Second by Garder. Passed with four in favor, Morse abstaining.

* Executive Director Compensation

Follow-up from FY 2022 budget meeting and discussion of staff compensation. Sullivan noted that all staff (including himself) had received a 2% bonus at the end of FY 2021. Salary increases generally in the 3-4% range, but some higher based on promotions/added responsibilities. The Executive Committee felt that an increase to keep the Director’s position on par with other RPCs and cost-of-living increases was appropriate. A 4.5% increase, to begin on January 1, 2022 was suggested. Also that Sullivan deserves a bonus in recognition of the additional work done over the past year (Covid response and resulting personnel challenges, office relocation, transition in the financial manager position, etc.): an additional 2% bonus, to be paid in the next pay cycle (i.e., this month), was suggested.

Motion by Monks: Increase the Executive Director’s salary by 4.5% beginning in January 2022 and pay a 2% bonus in the next pay period in recognition of work done over the past year. Second by LaVecchia. Passed unanimously.

* Draft Guidelines for BCRC Review of Act 250 and Section 248 Applications

Noted that the Executive Committee reviewed these at length at the August meeting and decided to consider adoption at this meeting. With no changes to the proposal suggested, LaVecchia motioned to adopt the Guidelines. Second by Morse. Passed unanimously.

The Executive Committee reminded Sullivan to create a single BCRC Policy document (policies currently are in numerous individual files) and add the Development Review Guidelines.

Monks also suggested that Sullivan create a guide for the next Executive Director – highlighting key responsibilities, timing of certain actions, other key aspects of the job. Sullivan agreed to begin working on it.

* Updates on Planning and Community Development Programs

Colvin provided an overview of recent community and economic development work and answered questions. Highlights included:

* + Everett Estate and Energizer Reuse Studies
	+ Community Housing Needs Assessment done as part of the Energizer study
	+ Putnam Phase II and other downtown area development initiatives in Bennington and how the town and BCRC can most effectively participate
	+ Brownfields work at the Putnam site
	+ Ongoing business support work, especially entrepreneurship and grant assistance
	+ Continuing work with BDCC to set up the Economic Development District that will provide capacity funding and additional development funding opportunities through US EDA
	+ Southern Vermont CUD and support for a large grant to complete a significant amount of broadband buildout in the region

Sullivan reviewed recent activities in planning programs, including:

* + Presentations at conferences (housing in Arlington – at the “Arlington Commons” property where BCRC is supporting funding for redevelopment and village infrastructure at the NNECAPA conference in Burlington)
	+ ARPA Municipal Technical Assistance – Allison and Callie coordinating their work with VLCT and WRC, supported by an agreement with the state (through RRPC)
	+ Bylaw Modernization project – Working to pull ten towns and villages together into a single large two-year grant; questions raised as to workload for staff and various options for adding a planner (maybe in conjunction with a “circuit-rider” role providing zoning admin/development review support for two or more towns)
	+ New Municipal Planning Grant (applications)
		- Survey of possible commercial/industrial development sites in Pownal
		- Comprehensive land use regulation update in Arlington
		- National Guard Armory building reuse study in Bennington
	+ Solid Waste – noted effort to establish a permanent household hazardous waste facility in the region so that HHW “events” are no longer necessary
	+ Brownfields – investigating possible assessment work on additional properties in Manchester and Bennington (note that some additional state funds are now available)
	+ Water Quality – helping municipalities with road erosion inventories, equipment grants, and compliance with Municipal Road General Permit requirements
	+ Emergency Management – finishing up administrative work associated with damage reporting (municipal infrastructure and some private properties) related to flash flooding that occurred in storm at the end of July – recent federal disaster declaration was based on information collected
	+ Transportation – Sullivan participating in a “Road Usage Fee Study” advisory committee related to revenues for the transportation fund as EVs and other efficient vehicles reduce gas tax receipts; upcoming meetings with GMCN regarding Northshire transportation needs and other possible service enhancements; completion of some bike-ped projects and new project management work on others
	+ Energy – Callie’s role, especially supporting NWWVT “Heat Squad” program in Bennington County and success of the Window Dressers program through local energy committees with BCRC support
* Executive Director Succession Planning

Noted that Sullivan will get a list of stakeholders to interview to Nancy Jackson; Committee members should forward any thoughts to him.

* Meeting adjourned at 9:50 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Sullivan

Director