

**Regional Planning Commission Meeting  
(Formerly Known as Representatives)**

June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Mt Eustis Commons

1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room

Littleton, NH

Minutes

**Present:**

Carl Martland, Vice Chair, Sugar Hill

Vicki DeLalla, Treasurer, Stratford

Paul Robitaille, Gorham

Sam Chase, Whitefield

Dennis Lunn, Stark

Peter Higbee, Berlin

Tom McCue, Berlin

Elizabeth Rudiger, Dummer

Paula Strickton, Lincoln

Doug Grant, Randolph

Steve Knox, Albany

Evan Karpf, Carroll

Ray Gorman, Colebrook

Jennifer Fish, Coos County

Charles Goulet, Stratford

**Welcome and introductions** -- Vice Chair Carl Martland called the meeting to order at 4:02 pm. Carl introduced himself with the town he is from and asked everyone to briefly state their name and the town that they represent and for staff to introduce themselves and their respective title. Once that was complete Vice Chair Martland then turned the meeting over to Kathleen Frenette, Co-Executive Director & COO to discuss the budget presented.

**Budget-**

Ms. Frenette went through the FY 2019 North Country Council budget that was presented to the Commissioners. Questions regarding the indirect rate and what it is were answered by Ms. Frenette and Michelle Moren-Grey, Co-Executive Director & CEO to the satisfaction of the Commissioners. It was asked how much more is in the budget over last year and that value is \$300,000.

**Motion: Vice Chair Martland asked for a motion to accept the FY 2019 North Country Council Budget as presented. Paula Stickon of Lincoln moved to accept the budget as presented. Elizabeth Rudiger of Dummer, seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passed.**

The plan of work for FY 2019 was then presented to the Commissioners by Ms. Moren-Grey. She explained the role of administrator that North Country Council plays for all Northern Borders Regional Commission (NBRC) grants issued to municipalities in our district. She went on to explain the economic development for the Northumberland water and sewer line that's going into their industrial park is a private/public partnership. That means it is privately owned, the funds that are going into it are both public and private funds, that is an economic development administration grant and when done the community of Northumberland will own the water and sewer lines, we are the administrators of that grant and so that's a local contract, even though the funds are federal we are paid by the town of Northumberland to do the work.

For the town of Bethlehem, we are administering the Community Development Block Grant funds, this is under economic development and it is for the construction of the new Friendship House. We are paid, once again, by the town of Bethlehem for that as a local contract, even though these are technically federal funds that come from the state and then into the municipalities. That project is job retention and that is how it falls under economic development. Then in addition to that we have a local contract with Grafton County as the administrator for Community Development Block Grant funds to do a feasibility study for Cottage Hospital to look at increasing their service area.

From the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) we just received a Brownfields grant of \$300,000, of which \$200,000 is in hazardous substances and \$100,000 in petroleum that will be used over the course of three years that is federal funds. From Economic Development Administration (EDA) we receive funds every year to support our partnership grant and that is the funding that we use to maintain the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the region that assists with prioritizing projects and creating a strategy for economic development and also used as a vehicle for receiving funds into the community.

USDA, Rural Development, we have an application for solid waste that would support our solid waste efforts. We did not receive one for FY18. We also have a couple of other USDA grants but there is big competition. That is the work plan in a nutshell.

Vice Chair Martland thanked Ms. Moren-Grey for the comprehensive explanation of the FY 19 North Country Council work plan.

**Motion: Ms. Frenette asked for a motion to accept the FY 2019 North Country Council Plan of Work as presented. Steve Knox of Albany moved to accept the FY 19 work plan as presented. Charles Goulet of Stark seconded. Vice Chair Carl asked if there was any further discussion, there being none All were in favor. Motion passed.**

## **PLANNING COMMISSIONS**

Ms. Moren-Grey gave a presentation on the who, what, why and when, regarding planning commissions. At a recent planning commission directors meeting she attended the same kind of conversation goes on there about how do we explain what we do and this might be a good platform to start the conversation as a quick overview. She proceeded to brief the Commissioners on the history of regional planning commissions and some of what planning commissions do including North Country Council.

- Commissioners are nominated by their town planning board and then confirmed by their town select board as a Commissioner.
- A Commissioner term is for four years.
- A Commissioner represents not only their municipality but also the Council.
- The Planning Commission is responsible for preparing and updating the regional master plan and housing needs assessment every five years.
- NCC can assist towns with subdivision regulations for instance and make recommendations and one of those recommendations is to seek legal counsel on those planning recommendations.

Other areas that Planning Commissions can assist with are:

Local transportation which includes:

Parking studies, road safety mapping infrastructure, zoning land use, maps for projects, grant applications, data collections, traffic counts, parking counts, surveys on businesses, disaster preparedness.

Tech assistance with grant applications for federal and state funding, or contracted services. NCC knows the guidelines and are well versed in the regulations for these types of grant funded projects. USDA Rural Development, Community Development Block Grants, Northern Borders Regional Commission grants and foundation grants are all grant types that we can assist with.

Local planning, education opportunities and consulting or technical assistance for these.

Last summer NCC held two invasive species workshops, we partnered with the state and communities to put on the informational sessions. We found that commissioners, municipal public works departments, solid waste transfer stations want to be versed in invasive species.

NCC is also a federally designated Economic Development District or EDD, federally designated organization by U.S. Department of Commerce by EDA and formed in 1978 and we are currently 1 of 3 in state.

When you apply for a grant they ask how you align with regional or local plan, how does your project align with the local or regional plan. CEDS is the regionally driven process economic \planning process. Provide technical assistance for community development. Part of Bethlehem UNH Business Expansion Program, Monday night presented survey data to comminute part of expert panel. Allows NCC to do quite a bit of community work. Nutshell---Public agency association of local governmental political subdivision of state and quazi-governmental entity. We're NOT a state agency, not a 501(c) (3) a private not for profit, not a regional government. The RSA states that organ of bylaws, commissions are governing body. The chair and vice chair, secretary and treasurer, officers are elected annually. Minutes are recorded. The Bylaws last adopted for NCC in November 2016.

Over the next few weeks we will be sharing information regarding committees, and if when asked to join a committee what is the commitment, it will be clear. The next meeting will be Aug 15, 2018 and will be here at Mt. Eustis Commons. Our annual meeting will be October 17th, with the time to be determined at a later date, it will be at the Littleton Opera House.

Ms. Moren-Grey asked if there were any questions or comments.

Suggestions were to float the meetings on different days, have the meetings later in the day for working Commissioners.

The August meeting scheduled will be kept, and Commissioners homework is to think about those who participate, collect info and make educated changes in time, and day of week.

Any other thoughts or suggestions please email ideas to [mmoren@nccouncil.org](mailto:mmoren@nccouncil.org) or to [kfrenette@nccouncil.org](mailto:kfrenette@nccouncil.org)

**Staff:**

Nick—Planner with NCC for 18 months. Summer traffic counts program. 160 to set up. About 90 counts done, sent info to Public of transportation, will set up counters requested, one week, take info to office, analyzed, adjust information as needed. Counts found online, DOT traffic volume report on google. Transportation management system, every document online. These counts are useful for prioritizing. Figure routes and improvement and traffic patterns. Growth management and changing local spending money.

Brad Falco—summer intern came on one month ago. Target assessments on local and state roads in Randolph Berlin, Gorham, Milan, and Shelburne. Culvert work being done in partnership with NHDOT, NH Fish and Game. This information is helping to inform culverts replacement priority, aquatic life. Coordinate maintenance.

Danica: New Associate Planner for week and a half. Main focus is data population density, low income population. Socioeconomic conditions and identify populations, specific trends.

Ms. Moren-Grey explained that Alex Belenz the Lead Transportation Planner informed everyone that Alex is not here, he is currently in Concord attending meeting on bus services rural areas of state tonight. Working in transportation, guiding work happening in transportation and community planning. Vice Chair Martland who serves as the North Country Scenic Byway Chair said that there have been minor changes on trails, one in Berlin, Gorham and Alex has been a great help with that.

Ms. Moren-Grey gave an update on economic development as well. Almost nearing completion for Friendship house that provides drug rehab services in Bethlehem. The old building couldn't be upgraded and would be shut down if not upgraded and it's the only drug service in northern NH.

Water and sewer project in Northumberland, will be wrapped up by end of July or August, allow business to come in and build.

Ms. Moren-Grey circulated three post it notes to everyone and all were asked to write their community name, what they are seeing as a need, or a gap not filled, planning assistance, an asset not highlighted, emphasize a benefit, or perhaps looking for a resource.

Ms. Moren-Grey stated the reason for this is to hear the challenges in community, are they all hearing the same thing? NCC is listening. Results were much to do with transportation. She will take this back to the office and connect to resources and is there a way we can help, how can we solve the challenge. Public housing came up once, surprised by this.

Discussion ensued between the group regarding housing, hotels, motels, Air B & B, safety issues with Air B & B, monitoring if they are paying their rooms and meals tax. The other issue with Air B & B is that they are taking away housing for people in the local community and it is a big issue in the Conway area as Air B & B is more lucrative than a month to month rental.

Transportation issues were discussed which also included the ATV's coming to the area and where are those people coming from. Safety, public transportation, access to National Forest roads, training for resources for land use, code enforcement, economic development, tourism, signage, tourism promotion, infrastructure, broadband, repairing water and sewer, drug testing, solar projects were a number of items that came up for discussion and on the post it notes that were of concern to the attendees.

Director Grant asked about the status of the Trails Project and Ms. Moren-Grey replied that the status is finished for that project and in the hands of the funders, thus not available at this time. She will have to hear from the funders about distributing that information. The Office of Strategic Initiatives has been having meetings regarding flood plains and the next meeting will be in Littleton in August.

**Motion: Vice Chair Martland asked for a motion to adjourn. Charles Goulet from Stratford moved to adjourn the meeting. Steve Knox of Albany seconded. All were in favor. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned.**