

NORTH COUNTRY COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, March 17, 2022
In-Person Quorum is Needed
Franconia Town Hall
421 Main Street, Franconia, NH
2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Paul Robitaille, Chair; Jennifer Fish, Treasurer; Ben Gaetjens-Oleson, Vice-Chair; and Carl Martland.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT VIRTUALLY: Mark Decoteau; and Mark Dindorf.

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Michelle Moren-Grey, Executive Director; and James Steele, Finance Manager & Special Projects Planner.

Call to Order

Chairperson Robitaille called the meeting to order at 2:15 p.m.

- **Attendance**

Roll call was taken.

Minutes Approval

- **February 24, 2022**

MOTION: Vice-Chair Gaetjens-Oleson moved to unseal Minutes of February 24, 2022, nonpublic session. It was seconded by Board Member Martland.

Chairperson Robitaille: Yes.

Vice-Chair Gaetjens-Oleson: Yes.

Board Member Dindorf: Yes.

Board Member Martland: Yes.

Board Member Decoteau: Yes.

Board Member Fish: Yes.

The motion carried. (6-0-0).

MOTION: Vice-Chair Gaetjens-Oleson moved to accept the Minutes of February 24, 2022, as presented. It was seconded by Board Member Dindorf.

Board Member Martland brought up the fact that throughout the Minutes the phrase "Discussion was had regarding" started many of the sentences. He pointed out that on page 2, in the update, "Discussion was had regarding the difficulty of creating affordable workforce housing and the impact that it's having on their community," which he considered an accurate summary, following very specific question-and-answers. He went on to point out the last paragraph, under financial, where it states, "Discussion was had regarding whether the NCC is on track to be able to devote the resources to finish the projects we have budgeted for. He stated that he would like this to be more elaborated on, as there was a question-and-answer segment to this discussion, as well.

Discussion was had regarding amending the Minutes, and how in some instances it is okay to reflect generally that there was a conversation that took place, but sometimes it would be best to include specific questions and answers that highlight important points of those discussions.

Board Member Decoteau suggested amending the Motion to reflect adding a clarifying sentence regarding Michelle Moren-Grey's specific response, that the NCC had the ability to continue with this budget, if we could carry over.

MOTION: Vice-Chair Gaetjens-Oleson moved to accept the Minutes of February 24, 2022, as amended. It was seconded by Board Member Dindorf.

Chairperson Robitaille: Yes.

Vice-Chair Gaetjens-Oleson: Yes.

Board Member Dindorf: Yes.

Board Member Martland: Yes.

Board Member Decoteau: Yes.

Board Member Fish: Yes.

The motion carried. (6-0-0).

Financial

- **Review of Financials**

James Steele went over the financial report. He touched on a few key points:

- Broke even, basically what happened last month.
- Fell behind in billable hours, about 53% billable hours for the month.
- He had to use \$7,110 of dues to balance out for the month, with about \$28,000 available for the rest of the fiscal year.

He continued to go through the rest of the financials.

MOTION: Vice-Chair Gaetjens-Oleson moved to approve the financials, as presented. It was seconded by Board Member Fish.

Chairperson Robitaille: Yes.
Vice-Chair Gaetjens-Oleson: Yes.
Board Member Dindorf: Yes.
Board Member Martland: Yes.
Board Member Decoteau: Yes.
Board Member Fish: Yes.

The motion carried. (6-0-0).

- **Review of Draft Budget**

James Steele went over the draft budget. He touched on a few key points:

- Dues for next year: \$70,000, with \$35,000 already secured.
- State Grants up 20% due to a FHA Grant that was received.
- Federal Grants is up 6%.

He continued to go through the rest of the draft budget. The discussion was had regarding the Congressional delegation grant (Kuster) for housing readiness.

Ms. Moren-Grey noted that they have an Application pending for U.S. EPA Brownfields, another round of assessment funds, \$500,000 for 3 years to do assessment work in the region.

Ms. Moren-Grey went over other line items in the draft budget.

The following are some of the questions were posed to Ms. Moren-Grey and Mr. Steele:

- Q. On the DOT money, this year was \$250,000. And next year it's proposed \$264,000. What is the increase?
- A. More money in the Grant for consulting.
- Q. Money that could be carried over from this year to next year would be over and above?
- A. Correct.
- Q. If the annuity is removed what do you do if somebody starts taking advantage it?
- A. They can still be part of the annuity. We just don't match it.

Discussion was had regarding the draft budget.

Other Business

- **Certificate of Authority for Funding**

Ms. Moren-Grey provided a background regarding the Certificate of Authority for Funding.

MOTION: Vice-Chair Gaetjens-Oleson moved to authorize the Executive Director of North Country Council to accept funds and enter into contracts with the following Agencies: Economic Development Administration; United States Department of Agriculture; New Hampshire Department of Transportation; New Hampshire Community Development Finance Authority; and New Hampshire Business and Economic Affairs; and further authorize the Executive Director to authorize any document be necessary to effect Contracts and/or reimbursement requests; and

authorize the Chairman to sign said Certificate of Authority for Funding. It was seconded by Board Member Martland.

Chairperson Robitaille: Yes.
Vice-Chair Gaetjens-Oleson: Yes.
Board Member Dindorf: Yes.
Board Member Martland: Yes.
Board Member Decoteau: Yes.
Board Member Fish: Yes.

The motion carried. (6-0-0).

- **Northern Border Regional Commission 2022 SEID Grant Round**

Ms. Moren-Grey indicated that NBRC released its grant round this week and the timeline is on NBRC's website.

- **Update on Council's Report**

Ms. Moren-Grey provided updates on the following:

5-Year Update. She went over the process of the update.

Avesta Housing Project is underway via a CDBG grant through Conway NCC is administering the grant.

NCC is providing technical assistance to the City of Berlin for a CDBG Grant for the Northwoods Learning Center (childcare center looking for a suitable facility). S

Housing work on-going with the RHNA.

NCC is providing Dalton technical assistance, including help with the Master Plan.

Updating on community data profiles is happening.

The following questions were posed of Ms. Moren-Grey:

- Q. NH, pre-COVID was supposed to release a State Master Plan. Have you heard anything about it?
- A. No. There was supposed to be a Statewide Economic Development Strategy created for the State, because we do not have one, which quietly went away.

- **Review of Meeting Schedule**

Ms. Moren-Grey stated that they are going to be on an every-other month schedule, where the Official Meetings and Work Sessions take turns, occurring each month. She requested that the Work Session next month (April) would involve reviewing the Personnel Policy, and that it could take place virtually prior to 2:30 p.m. Discussion was had regarding holding the meeting virtually. She added that the next Official Meeting would be in May.

MOTION: Vice-Chair Gaetjens-Oleson moved to enter nonpublic session. It was seconded by Board Member Decoteau.

Chairperson Robitaille: Yes.
Vice-Chair Gaetjens-Oleson: Yes.
Board Member Dindorf: Yes.
Board Member Martland: Yes.
Board Member Decoteau: Yes.
Board Member Fish: Yes.

The motion carried. (6-0-0).

Entered into nonpublic session at 3:01

MOTION: Vice-Chair Gaetjens-Oleson moved to exit nonpublic session. It was seconded by Board Member Martland.

Chairperson Robitaille: Yes.
Vice-Chair Gaetjens-Oleson: Yes.
Board Member Dindorf: Yes.
Board Member Martland: Yes.
Board Member Decoteau: Yes.
Board Member Fish: Yes.

Public session reconvened at 3:21 pm

During the nonpublic session - Discussion regarding staff salaries no decisions were made.

Public Comment

None

MOTION: Vice-Chair Gaetjens-Oleson moved to adjourn. It was seconded by Board Member Martland.

Chairperson Robitaille: Yes.
Vice-Chair Gaetjens-Oleson: Yes.
Board Member Dindorf: Yes.
Board Member Martland: Yes.
Board Member Decoteau: Yes.
Board Member Fish: Yes.

The motion carried. (6-0-0).

Meeting Adjourned 3:37

Respectfully Submitted,

Victoria O'Connor, Recording Secretary
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