



# TWO RIVERS-OTTAUQUECHEE

William B. Emmons, III, Chairman  
Peter G. Gregory, AICP, Executive Director

REGIONAL COMMISSION

## TRORC Board Meeting

TRORC Offices, The King Farm  
Woodstock, VT  
September 28, 2011

### Meeting Minutes

- 1. Attendance:** Bill Emmons - Pomfret, Frank Roderick - Corinth, Jerry Fredrickson - Barnard, Jaime Hess - Norwich, Paul Haskell - Sharon, Carl Pepperman - Chelsea, Larry Straus - Rochester, Steve Campbell - Strafford, Nancy Jones - Bradford, Nelson Lee - Bridgewater, Bill Bayliss - Vershire, Skip Brown - West Fairlee, Dee Montie - Brookfield, Charles Wilson - Woodstock.  
**Staff** Peter Gregory, Dee Gish, Rita Seto, Kevin Geiger, Emma Zavez

- 2. Call To Order:**

Chairperson Emmons convened the meeting at 7:04 p.m.

- 3. Approval of Strafford Town Plan:**

After conclusion of the Public Hearing, the Board Members received and reviewed a copy of TRORC's Review of the Strafford Town Plan. Emma Zavez presented TRORC's review of the Strafford Town Plan. TRORC found that the town plan, overall, was acceptable, but in the future we would recommend a long-term outline and timeline detailing issues and funding sources; a more detailed energy chapter; the utilization of the Vermont Energy Atlas (an online tool); and a more detailed economic development chapter, as required in July of 2012. A motion was made by Dee Montie, seconded by Nelson Lee to approve the Strafford Town Plan. Motion passed unanimously.

- 4. Approval of Confirmation Action for the Town of Strafford:**

After conclusion of the Public Hearing, a motion was made by Nelson Lee and seconded by Frank Roderick to approve the Confirmation Action for the Town of Strafford. Motion passed unanimously.

- 5. Approval of July and August Financial Reports:**

The Board Members received and reviewed a copy of the July and August Financial Reports. Peter Gregory explained the foreseeable \$60,000 funding to underwrite staff time for a two month period from VTrans, to cover a portion of TRORC's Irene disaster recovery efforts. Peter explained his belief that FEMA public assistance and ANR

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funding may reach TRORC. In addition, Peter explained that due to the disaster recovery efforts, traditional TRORC projects were put on hold, creating a need to negotiate contract extensions. TRORC has been granted a one year extension for business recovery and continuity planning on our EDA contract. A motion then was made by Charles Wilson, seconded by Frank Roderick to accept the financial reports for July and August as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

**6. Acceptance of the FY 11 Audit Report and Management Letter:**

The Board Members received and reviewed a copy of the FY 11 Audit Report and Management Letter. Peter Gregory described that the audit revealed no major deficiencies. Peter explained the audit revealed some administrative concerns over the absence of his I-9 documentation, and some minor delays in account reconciliation during the staff transition period, both of which have been corrected. The audit includes federal financial assistance. Peter reminded the Board Members that a single audit is required when over \$500,000 of federal funding is received. A motion was made by Dee Montie, seconded by Paul Haskell to accept the FY 11 Audit Report and Management Letter as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

**7. Approval of FY 13 Dues Rate Increase:**

The Board Members received and reviewed copies of current and proposed TRORC Town Dues figures. The current FY12 Dues rate of \$1.105 per capita has not changed in over 20 years. Peter Gregory explained how the Executive Committee recommended the FY13 Dues rate increase to \$1.25 per capita, and use updated 2010 census population figures. A question from Charles Wilson inquired whether the current TRORC dues rate is average for Vermont RPC's. Peter Gregory explained that TRORC's rate is probably in the middle and that TRORC has not had a dues rate increase since 1989. A motion was made by Paul Haskell, seconded by Nelson Lee to approve the FY13 dues rate increase. Motion passed unanimously.

**8. Irene Recovery Efforts Presentation:**

Rita Seto reported on TRORC's involvement in hurricane Irene recovery efforts. Shortly after the disaster, Vermont put the RPC's in charge of information, resources and supplies for recovery efforts. Rita provided a slide show of photographs depicting the devastation in our region and explained how the Route 100 corridor was the most hardest hit. TRORC assisted with local damage assessments to roads and bridges. This information was collected and given to the State. TRORC assisted with Vermont Emergency Management plans, pre-disaster mitigation plans, and town road and bridge standards. TRORC assisted FEMA with applicant briefings in the area, providing maps, safety hazard information. TRORC helped collect and distribute safety cones from VEM to towns. Rita described how FEMA teams consist of a project specialist, an AOT representative, an RPC representative and a town representative. Rita reported how initial visits to TRORC's 28 affected towns are nearly completed. FEMA will then conduct a second visit to towns and plan for debris removal and emergency

reconstruction. Category C will follow, which includes road and bridge reconstruction. Rita reported that 28 of TRORC's 30 towns have filed a Request for Public Assistance from FEMA. A question by Jerry Frederickson asked about recovery cost price estimates. Rita explained that only best guesses are coming from towns. There are also big, aggregate cost figures coming from the state, but the numbers won't be refined until projects are completed. Jerry also asked about shelter requirements of affected towns. Who will provide shelter for residents who have lost their homes? How will future housing needs be addressed? What is the role of the Governor's Task Force on Housing? Other Board Member attendees offered that designated shelters as well as private neighbors have stepped up to take in homeless victims. Kevin Geiger offered that towns are trying to provide rental properties in their towns. Some FEMA trailers are also arriving in Vermont, but the Housing Task Force is trying to avoid temporary trailers. Charles Wilson offered that FEMA is only for residential victims and the SBA helps small businesses. The Vermont Irene Relief Fund also funds grants for flood victims. Kevin Geiger offered that there is also the possibility of a buyout for flooded properties at pre-flood market value prices. Rita discussed the mutual work agreement where public works departments from other towns can bill for their work in flood affected towns. Other questions included Jerry Frederickson's question regarding how initial communication problems were resolved. Larry Straus recalled how Rochester was completely isolated for 48 hours after the flood and the only means of cell phone coverage was to drive to ridgelines. Kevin Geiger noted how the Air National Guard was able to reach all isolated towns within days. Jerry Frederickson also posed a question regarding school bus route mapping. Rita admitted she did not know the answer to that, and that towns and supervisory units were working on school bus routes on their own. Paul Haskell voiced his thanks to TRORC for their disaster recovery support. Paul suggested that we take this opportunity to catalog what has worked and what hasn't as a result of this disaster. Rita explained that the culvert inventories have been helpful for recovery efforts. Kevin Geiger explained that BEOP's (basic emergency operations plan) were also helpful, as they contained all the relevant contact information. BEOP's are updated at least annually, after town meetings. Copies of the BEOP's are sent to Select Board Chairs and town Emergency Coordinators. Bill Bayliss asked how the emergency coordinators are trained. Vermont Emergency Management has voluntary courses that coordinators are encouraged to take, but there are no mandatory requirements. Kevin offered that regular, town-wide meetings, held in public venues were helpful for recovery efforts, while Rita praised volunteer groups and online list serves as helpful. Larry Straus commended Addison County. Larry described how Addison County's public works department was well organized and was able to pool its resources. Larry also described how Addison did not want to bill for its' services, it only wanted to help its' neighbor. Charles Wilson again described the Vermont Irene Relief Fund for businesses. Grants are available for up to \$5,000. Jerry Frederickson asked what assistance is available to non-profits? Kevin Geiger described that Requests for Public Assistance for non-profit agencies must be filed by October 17<sup>th</sup>. This applies to schools, fire departments and quasi-governmental functioning non-profits. Carl Pepperman asked how towns can correct flooding problems with planning, including sewage treatment plants that are currently located in flood plains? Peter Gregory described how TRORC and towns have a good opportunity to improve planning. It was noted that FEMA highwater GIS

mapping has been done, but that flood plain maps may not change. Jamie Hess noted that debris in rivers and brooks that was trapped by bridges was a major cause of flooding. Jerry Frederickson noted that debris from the Kedron Brook was responsible for flooding in Woodstock. Nelson Lee asked if the Dead River Co., the White Cottage, and the Woodstock Farmer's Market were planning on rebuilding along Route 4 and noted that rebuilding would go against what we are trying to accomplish. Charles Wilson noted that it was up to the individual whether to rebuild in the same site. Kevin Geiger commented that TRORC would like to talk with affected businesses and describe the buyout option. We would like to keep the businesses in the community. Many of the affected businesses were just outside the mapped 100 year flood zone, so those businesses would not be required to rebuild to flood standards. Jamie Hess noted that of the Route 12 businesses in Lebanon, Staples and other businesses that were newer and built on higher ground were not flooded. Bill Emmons expressed his thanks for TRORC's efforts.

**9. HUD Regional Planning Sustainability Grant Submission discussion:**

Kevin Geiger described the HUD sustainable regional planning grant. TRORC is required to get 50% of our population to sign off on the grant. TRORC will apply for \$550,000, spread over 2 ½ years to conduct a regional plan by forming a consortium. This will not include areas in New Hampshire, as they are applying for their own HUD grant. The grant will provide for regional planning on transportation, agriculture, housing, etc. The grant proposal is due in one week. Steve Campbell suggested asking Molly Lambert for support, as the USDA is working with HUD for sustainable communities. Peter Gregory described that as part of the grant, there are matching requirements including in-kind support or cash. TRORC has some cash that it can commit. TRORC will subcontract to members of the consortium, that will include Champlain College and other non-traditional partners. The grant also requires at least 10% be spent on outreach. Dee Montie asked whether the HUD money was actually available. Peter Gregory assured her that it was, since the funds have already been set-aside in the current fiscal year. A motion was made by Paul Haskell and seconded by Jerry Frederickson to allow Bill Emmons to sign a letter in support of the HUD grant. The motion was unanimously approved.

**10. Commissioner and Director Updates**

Peter Gregory indicated that TRORC's Sally Hull's last day was September 30. Peter has already received 25 resumes to fill the position. Peter also indicated that TRORC has a temporary employee, Brian Hamlin, who is helping with GIS work.

**11.** A Motion was made by Paul Haskell and seconded by Kevin Geiger to adjourn. The Motion passed unanimously.

**12.** Meeting Adjourned at 8:47 p.m.