

**TRORC
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Virtual Meeting

August 12, 2020

MEETING MINUTES

Attendance: Jerry Fredrickson, Chair; Bill Emmons, Vice Chair; Nancy Jones, Treasurer; David Brandau, Bill Edgerton, Nancy Malmquist, Kevin Geiger, Senior Planner; Peter G. Gregory, Executive Director; Lori Kay, Finance Manager.

1. Call to Order/Changes to Agenda:

Chair Fredrickson convened the meeting at 3:08 p.m. A quorum was declared by the Chair.

Vice Chair Emmons requested an addition to the agenda – to add TROR Foundation to the “Other Updates” portion of the agenda.

2. Public Comment:

No members of the public were present.

3. Approval of the July 8, 2020 and July 14, 2020 Minutes:

On a motion made by Emmons, seconded by Brandau, the Minutes of July 8, 2020 and July 14, 2020 were approved as amended.

Gregory noted that there was an error in the July 8 minutes - the effective date of the Regional Plan is August 19 and not September 2 as previously reported.

Fredrickson offered a correction as well – the deadline for staff to submit their input for Gregory’s annual review was extended to August 10 and not July 31 as previously reported.

4. Acceptance of the unaudited July 2020 Financial Report:

On a motion from Jones, seconded by Edgerton, the July 2020 Financial Report was unanimously accepted as presented. Gregory noted that cash revenue is typically high in July as we receive payments for our annual town dues as well as a \$60,000 advance payment for our annual ACCD contract. Gregory added that we have had to purchase replacement transportation-counting equipment for the Transportation contract. These purchases mean we will exceed our expected budget for transportation equipment but all of it is covered through the VTrans

Gerald Fredrickson, Chair ~ Peter G. Gregory, AICP, Executive Director
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contract.

Fredrickson noted that 18% of the Equipment/Software Contract line-item had already been used. Gregory explained that we make annual payments for software licenses which can create a bump like this. TRORC does not expect to exceed the budgeted amount.

5. Keys to the Valley Housing Study Update:

Geiger provided an overview of the Housing Study to date. The survey has been completed and the data collected will be included in the final report. The Housing Study is currently at the “Buildout Models” stage where the team is identifying possible locations where additional housing could be sited while maintaining the neighborhood’s characteristics.

The team is also preparing a high-level zoning review and creating a resource on the elements of building houses – who builds them, how are they built based on type of housing, and financing.

A draft report will be completed by the end of September. Recommendations are expected to include financing, regulatory reform where it makes sense, building at scale to reflect neighborhoods, and private funding are all needed to address the lack of housing in the 67 towns that are within the study area.

The Housing Study will be on the Agenda for the September 23 TRORC Board Meeting.

6. Executive Director Goals for FY21:

Adoption of Regional Plan – The Regional Plan was approved by the Commissioners. Twenty-six Commissioners (including one Alternate) voted to accept the Regional Plan as written. Zero votes were cast in opposition of the Regional Plan.

Energy Coordinator – Geoff Martin has been hired and will start on August 19. There is a possibility that TRORC will need to hire a Planner to work on energy-related projects if additional contracts are secured.

Conservation At-Large Commissioner – Possible candidates for this position were discussed.

Public Service Department Energy Determination on new Energy Plan – Follow-on work once new Regional Plan is effective. Staff are writing up the justification now. There will be a public hearing at the end of September. The Public Service Department will have 60 days to make a determination, then the TRORC Board will once again be able to make determinations for Towns.

Investment Policy – Fredrickson indicated this item would be discussed later in the meeting.

TRORC Strategic Plan – Gregory outlined the process to update the Strategic Plan, which includes identifying a few Board members and staff to review and update the Strategic Plan as a team. Tasks would include re-affirming items that had not yet been accomplished but are still relevant and identifying and filling in any gaps in the Plan based on the current environment before bringing it before the Board.

Fredrickson noted that no progress was made on this goal last year. Ideas to jumpstart activity included getting assistance from either staff or an outside consultant.

Transition Plan for Executive Director – Gregory stated that little progress was made last year but it still needs to be on the list of goals. Gregory noted that he does not plan on moving on anytime soon so there is time to develop and institute a multi-year transition plan.

New Funding Streams for TROR Foundation – Gregory noted that the Foundation received funding last fiscal year for the Housing Project. Hiring a someone to do grant writing, research and relationship building for the Foundation could make the Foundation a more effective partner for TRORC.

Edgerton suggested that Gregory provide a summary to the Executive Committee regarding his progress toward meeting last year's goals. Gregory responded that two of the FY20 goals were completed – writing a Solar proposal and hiring a replacement Finance Manager. The remaining goals were not achieved although progress was made toward achieving them. Emmons stated that Covid-19 created a lot of disruption for TRORC – people working from home, etc. – yet things went very smoothly at TRORC.

Jones offered her congratulations to Gregory on his being named the winner of the 2020 Arthur Gibb Award for Individual Leadership from the Vermont Natural Resources Council. Gregory noted that he recently learned that his nomination came from TRORC staff.

7. Investment Policy:

Mascoma Bank has provided some input on the draft Investment Policy. Gregory will review and incorporate the comments and share it with the Executive Committee for discussion at the next Executive Committee meeting. The Committee asked that it be sent out as soon as possible.

8. Updates:

Energy Coordinator – Geoff Martin starts August 19. Ongoing meetings of the Intermunicipal Regional Energy Steering Committee will be held on a monthly basis. Towns will be prioritizing their energy needs and reach out to Martin with those priorities.

Summer Planning Tech – Allyn Ricker has been hired as a temporary, part-time employee to assist with road erosion and culvert inventories. All his work is contract related so he is fully funded.

CDBG-CV Sole Proprietor Business Grants – Kevin Geiger and Sarah Wraight are working full time on this project. We will earn \$85,000 by the end of December. A second business grant program is anticipated with approximately \$90,000 in revenue for TRORC.

Energy Plan – see comments above in Section 6.

Regional Plan – Gregory indicated the Regional Plan will be effective on August 19. Tory Littlefield is editing the final document, incorporating feedback received from a professional editor. TRORC will publish the document soon after.

Funding – The contract with the East Central Vermont Economic Development District for FY21 has been signed – approximately \$25,000 in funding TRORC’s role in the multi-regional commission project.

Additionally, each Economic Development District in Vermont is being awarded \$400,000 in Covid relief funds. TRORC is expected to receive \$130,000 over two years for our time on this project. Contracting agreements are in process.

TRORC is waiting for word on another Covid-related grant from Economic Development Administration for Creative Economy activities. Grant awards are being made on a first come-first serve basis. We have been told they are writing a response to our application now and confirmed our proposal was added to the queue rather early. If this \$275,000 grant is awarded, an additional staff will be needed.

Two Rivers-Ottaquechee Regional Foundation – Emmons suggested that there may be funding opportunities for the Foundation from some of the Covid-related grant-making organizations. Gregory offered to coordinate a Foundation Board meeting to be held immediately before the next Executive Committee meeting – September 9 at 2pm. Gregory will check with Don Bourdon to see if he is available at that day/time, as well as develop a draft agenda.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee will take place on Wednesday, September 9 at 3pm.

9. Executive Session:

At 4:27pm, the meeting went into executive session to discuss the performance evaluation of the Executive Director.

At 5:00pm, the meeting was adjourned.

Meeting Minutes prepared by:
Lori Kay, Finance Manager, August 14, 2020.