

**TRORC**  
**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**King Farm**

**Woodstock, VT**

**September 11, 2024**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Attendance:** Bill Emmons, Chair; John Echeverria, Vice Chair; Peter Berger, Treasurer; Nancy Jones, Secretary; Ken Alton; Nancy Malmquist; Brian Loeb; Peter Gregory, Executive Director; Christina Scott, Finance Manager

**1. Call to Order/ Changes to Agenda**

Chair Emmons convened the meeting at 3:28pm after the team troubleshot some technical difficulties, a quorum was declared. No changes were made to the agenda.

**2. Public Comment:**

No public in attendance, no public comments received.

**3. Approval of the August 14, 2024 Minutes:**

On a motion made by Berger and seconded by Jones, the minutes of August 14, 2024, were approved.

**4. Acceptance of the unaudited August 2024 Financial Reports:**

The acceptance of the unaudited August Financial Reports were unanimously accepted as presented on a motion made by Nancy Malmquist and seconded by Peter Berger.

Jones questioned the large expense causing an uptick in Equipment – and Gregory explained the unanticipated expense for the TPI project having to replace damaged traffic counters.

Again, we had a lot of Receivables, inflows this month, from billings that took place as of June 30. We do not do a lot of monthly billing, it is typically quarterly, which we will be doing in a couple of weeks.

**5. Approval for FY26 Dues:**

The FY26 Dues chart reflected the 3% automatic increase previously suggested by the Board. The recommended Dues were unanimously recommended to the full board as presented on a motion made by Peter Berger and seconded by Nancy Jones. The full Board will vote on September on September 25.

**6. Updates:**

**a. Staffing:**

Sydney Steinle will be physically leaving TRORC as of October 9<sup>th</sup> to move to Kansas to take over running her family farm but has agreed to work remotely on a part time basis which we are confident will be equally beneficial. Her focuses are on Emergency Management Projects, Municipal Technical Assistance Program, known as MTAP and she's done Hazard Mitigation Plans. She's very diligent, conscientious, hard-working and she will be greatly missed.

Emmons suggested placing an ad to recruit a new staff member, to avoid overextending other Planners. Gregory agreed another staff member is warranted in time as the MERP program takes off, there would be enough workload to utilize another Planner and with Sydney's office open, we have office space to accommodate.

**b. Act 250:**

2025 will be heavily focused on working directly with communities on Regional Plan changes. This will build the foundation for much of what goes forward. Educating towns on the changes that will occur soon.

Development of housing and roads makes it subject to review.

Due to the changes of the law, RPCs are in the process of standardizing mapping protocols because each RPC has to redo its land use maps and land use element, and then re-adopt by December of 2026 with the New Land Use Regulatory Board.

Once approved, towns can apply for different Act 250 exemptions and the temporary exemptions go away, and permanent exemptions are there for those that want them. It is not mandatory.

Rule making process on Tier 3 will involve combined participation from communities and towns. Focuses on rural environments that contain resources of significance, still to be defined. It will take years. We have concerns regarding going to towns to discuss before we have answers. People don't want to panic, but do want answers, and really, we have none as of yet.

- *BRIAN LOEB left the meeting* -

**c. Legislative:**

Mr. Gregory is currently following a study committee on the County Governance Bill – this was a bill to study county government, and the fact it is not doing what it does in other states, more broadly, regional governance. There is talk about councils of government and looking at RPCs helping more in communities in some way. Councils of Government form a service of delivery at the substate level would be one notion – towns would get together, run the council, and determine what it does, and then they provide services.

**d. Projects:**

MERP Program is moving toward implementation for the high energy burden towns. Six towns are submitting good sized applications for implementation.

VT Bond Bank is coming to fruition to help small water systems around the state. They are interested in hiring Two Rivers RC to manage efforts of RPCs to determine status, prepare mapping and maybe some back-office work.

Grant and Loan Program of \$6 or \$8 million (ARPA) for emergency repairs and get things up and running.

## **7. Executive Director Performance Review Discussion and FY25 Goals**

Emmons has yet to prepare a formal letter of Gregory's performance review.

Discussion of Goals:

Some items are recurring year after year, such as the Water Systems Project, new funding that could yield income for year forward, but is a Statewide Program and we're the lead. Same with Rivers Programs, MTAP and Home Buyouts.

Gregory answered questions and elaborated on a variety of goals as requested.

Review the Strategic Plan – Board was in agreement they should review this together more frequently and make revisions as needed.

Communications/ Public Relations – conduct more press releases, have staff more present to the public. Share TRORC updates and wins so people are more aware of projects we are working on and areas of success. Kyra and Geena will be leads in these efforts.

Items unanimously agreed to be added to Executive Director job description:

*Advocacy* – Inform and Report to Board; areas Two Rivers is advocating Legislative on, both State and Nationally.

*Hiring/ Managing/ Training of staff, oversight of organization*

*“Visible Player”/ Transparent*

- Jones motioned to adopt with said changes, Berger seconded.

Board agreed on hiring a recruiter to assist in search: Specializing in Municipal Planning/ Executive Directors/ Environmental to really drill into expertise of candidates

**8. Executive Session if needed:**

Agreed not necessary

**9. Other**

Public Safety in our Region

Crime, Drugs, Homelessness

What is the root cause, how can we get ahead of it?

Small towns are at a disadvantage. Is Funding an issue?

Are we as a State sending the wrong message?

Shared Service Discussions would be a great time to address matters and hear what struggles towns feel they are facing

There are a variety of ways Two Rivers can assist towns

Scholarship Committee needs 1 additional member. Will mention at Board meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Meeting minutes prepared by:

Christina Scott, Finance Manager

September 18, 2024