Members Present: Gabby Ciuffreda, Chair; Piet van Loon, Tim Arsenault, Greg Brown, Steven Lembke, Jack Cunningham, Bobbi Kilburn

Members Participating by Phone: None.

Absent: Carolyn Partridge, Lew Sorenson

Staff present: Chris Campany, Executive Director; Mike Shaughnessy, Finance Manager

Public: Karen Astley, Commissioner - Putney

Presenter: None

Call to Order: Commissioner Gabby Ciuffreda, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

Additions/Changes to Agenda: The request by the Town of Londonderry to provide advice on engagement with the Lowell Lake State Park master planning process was added to the agenda following discussion of Personnel Policy.

Administrative Reports:

Secretary’s Report: The minutes of the May 14, 2019 meeting of the Executive Board were approved on a motion by Commissioner Arsenault, seconded by Commissioner Cunningham, with Commissioners Kilburn and Astley abstaining.

Treasurer’s Report: Finance Manager Mike Shaughnessy provided an update on the budget and finances. He noted that we have a surplus for the month and year to date. He also mentioned that the audit process had been delayed but state agencies were aware of the situation. On a motion by Commissioner van Loon, seconded by Commissioner Cunningham, the Treasurer’s Report was approved.

Program:

Review and Approval of Personnel Policy: Chair Ciuffreda provided context for the Personnel Committee’s review of the draft that was now before the Executive Board, followed by a request for comments on the draft. It was suggested that a statement be added that explained the Executive Director’s role is defined by the Commission bylaws. A statement about unpaid leave policy broadly, that would cover circumstances such as legislative leave, should be added. Executive Director Campany provided a summary of staff issues and requests. These included medical marijuana, at will termination without cause/reason, number of days of paid sick leave that might be accrued, the inclusion of the Associate Director in the policy, paid maternity or family leave, paid membership/training/certification to professional membership organizations, especially the American Institute of Certified Planners, and the establishment of a means by which employees do not have to bear work-related expenses until they are reimbursed. Chris also added that Personal Days should be
struck as they are not offered, the 6-month delay ahead of use of vacation leave should be struck as that policy is not applied, and a definition of “down time” should be added. Chris explained that medical marijuana should be treated as any other prescription drug, and the Board endorsed his suggestion that a sentence be added that explains that if a prescribed drug will have the effect of impairing the employees’ ability to work, that the employee should raise the issue with the Executive Director in order to provide reasonable accommodations for the employee’s use of their prescribed medication. The Board felt that language allowing termination with or without cause must remain as that is what statute dictates. It was explained that the number of accrued sick days (1 day earned per month/up to 10 days accrued) relates to the WRC’s short-term disability policy. The Board supported the exploration of maternity and/or family leave options and assessment of how it would impact the budget and employee take-home pay. The Board also supported the exploration of AICP membership support scenarios, including staff share which may constitute certification maintenance being borne by the employee. Chris explained that he and Mike had discussed use of a WRC credit card to resolve the employee-borne expense until reimbursement issue. Infant in the workplace policy was supported and the Board asked Chris to research language about best practices. The Board agreed that the policies, once the drafting is complete, should be reviewed by legal counsel – probably through the Vermont League of Cities and Towns.

Request by Londonderry for Lowell Lake State Park Master Plan Guidance: Executive Director Campany explained a request from Planning Commission Chair Sharon Crossman, and WRC Commissioner George Mora, that the WRC provide guidance as to how the town should engage in the Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation master planning process. It was Chris’ understanding that the town planning commission and Selectboard had not yet officially engaged in the process, but citizens and citizen organizations had. The Executive Board asked Chris to send a note to Sharon and George asking that the town planning commission and/or Selectboard officially engage with the Department, and get up to speed with the documents produced to date, and then come back to staff with their needs.

Executive Board Trainings: Chair Ciuffreda suggested that the Executive Board plan for trainings in running an effective meeting, high-level understanding of WRC finances, and understanding and managing implicit bias over the next year once the new slate of officers is in place in October. Chris was directed to identify instructors. Commissioner Lembke suggested that training for board member responsibilities be added to the list.

Recommendations for Nominating Committee: Chair Ciuffreda explained that she’d spoken with Nominating Committee Chair Partridge. A request for nominations will be sent out and recommended nominees will be sent to the committee. It is anticipated that Commissioner Partridge will follow up directly with Citizen Interest Commissioners to determine their willingness to continue serving, as well as Executive Board members.

New Appointments: There were no committee appointments requested.

Executive Director Report: Executive Director Campany summarized his sense that climate-change driven migration to Vermont is a real possibility that the region and towns should be considering. This was underscored by recent articles about and a workshop for coastal New England communities that are planning for “managed retreat” as sea level rises and coastal storms become more severe.
Committee Chair Updates:
Project Review Committee Chair Cunningham noted that Project Review Committee is not seeing many development applications. Community Development Committee Chair Arsenault noted that Representative Laura Sibilia would be the guest on August 8th to discuss high speed broadband.

The Emergency Planning Committee held a meeting with representatives from local healthcare and aging agencies to share our proposed phone-tree process for serving vulnerable populations during an emergency. The plan was enthusiastically supported by the group and will likely result in the scheduling of a tabletop exercise to test the process, prior to a presentation to regional EMS workers on October 8th.

Review of Action Items from Meeting: A joint meeting of the Personnel and Finance Committees was scheduled for August 8th at 5:30.

Adjournment: On a motion by Commissioner Arsenault, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:58 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ashley Collins