Executive Board  
January 14, 2020  
WRC Conference Room

Members Present: Gabby Ciuffreda, Chair; Karen Astley, Piet van Loon, Tim Arsenault, Lise Fortin, Steven Lembke, Bobbi Kilburn  
Absent: Carolyn Partridge, Jack Cunningham  
Staff present: Chris Campany, Executive Director  
Public/Guests: Stephen Dotson, Commissioner for Putney  
Presenter: none  

Call to Order: Commissioner Gabby Ciuffreda, Chair, called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m.  

Additions/Changes to Agenda: Executive Director Campany asked that the Brattleboro Retreat Finances and State Position item be removed as the situation was rapidly evolving.

Administrative Items:  
Secretary/Treasurer’s Report: The minutes of the December 17, 2019 meeting were amended to strike the section on the adoption of the Wardsboro Town Plan, which had actually occurred at a prior meeting, and the correction of a typographical error in the last paragraph. On a motion by Commissioner Arsenault, seconded by Commissioner Lembke, the minutes were approved by a unanimous vote.

Treasurer Bobbi Kilburn reported on the most recent Finance Committee meeting, which was held jointly with the Personnel Committee, on Thursday, January 9th. Draft minutes from the joint meeting were distributed. She felt great progress had been made by staff in closing out the accounting for FY2019. She also explained that she had developed a calendar to reflect new Finance Committee engagement in financial oversight. The Finance Committee will check in with staff each week before Executive Board. Executive Board will receive a narrative and a statement of accounts at each meeting. The Full Commission will receive the same narrative and the statement of accounts will be available for review. Financial literacy training will be provided to both the Executive Board and the Full Commission to help them better understand the information they’ll be asked to review. The Finance Committee reviewed its Purpose and Objectives statement and felt no substantive changes were needed at this time. The Treasurer’s Report was approved by a unanimous vote on a motion by Commissioner Lembke, seconded by Commissioner Arsenault.

Program:  
Sibling Region Subcommittee Letter: Sibling Region Subcommittee Chair Stephen Dotson was present to answer any questions about a draft letter of introduction to entities in the Hassleholm/Skane area of Sweden for use by subcommittee members who will be traveling to the area on their own initiative and at their own expense. The Board asked that the letter be edited to
state that a reciprocal visit would be welcome rather than hosted by the WRC. On a motion by Commissioner Arsenault, seconded by Commissioner van Loon, the Executive Board voted to forward the letter to the Full Commission for approval with the Board’s endorsement. The letter will be presented at the next Full Commission meeting scheduled for January 28th.

**Personnel Committee Report:** Personnel Committee Chair van Loon and Chair Ciuffreda referred the Board to the draft minutes of the aforementioned joint meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committees. It was explained that a staff person had requested that the Commission provide short-term disability insurance during maternity leave. The Personnel Committee reviewed the current policy, which states that benefits for part-time employees are available to those who work a minimum of 30 hours per week and who have worked for the Commission for one year or more. The Personnel Committee suggested that the Personnel Policy be amended to establish a threshold of a minimum of 20 hours per week and retain the one year worked requirement. The Personnel Committee also recommended that the personnel policy update process resume from where it had been suspended in July, and that the Board consider review of the update by legal counsel. On a motion by Commissioner Arsenault, seconded by Commissioner Lembke, the Board voted unanimously to amend the personnel policy to replace the 30 hour per week threshold requirement with 20 hours, and that the Executive Director go forward with the solicitation of a legal review of the personnel policy update. A budget of $3,000 or less was suggested for the review.

**Comments on Draft Clean Water Service Provider Request for Proposals:** Executive Director Campany provided a draft letter for the Board’s consideration in response to the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources request for comments on the draft Clean Water Service Provider Request for Proposals (RFP). Chris expressed staff concerns that the RFP was soliciting proposals for clean water service providers in all basins rather than only those that drain into lakes Champlain and Memphremagog, which would seem to be in conflict with the schedule established by statute. Furthermore, no information is provided in the RFP about funding, and nitrogen reduction targets have not yet been established for those basins draining into Long Island Sound. Commissioner Fortin asked that language regarding Long Island Sound be clarified. On a motion by Commissioner Arsenault, seconded by Commissioner Lembke, the comments were approved.

**Review of Committees:** Chair Ciuffreda asked the Board to review the current committees for both membership composition and for overlap of purpose. There was discussion about the pros and cons of combining the Personnel and Finance committees. Executive Director Campany asked that the Executive Board have a dedicated conversation about the current approach to the Transportation Committee, and whether or not it achieves the function of being a regional transportation advisory committee. The Board agreed to continue the conversation in February in an effort to better rationalize the committees.

**Review of Non-Commissioners as Voting Members of Committees:** Chair Ciuffreda asked the Board to consider whether or not non-Commissioner committee members should have the same right to vote in committees as Commissioner committee members as is current practice. Concerns were raised that this could disincentivize service as a Commissioner if non-Commissioners still had the ability to vote in committees without the other responsibilities as those who serve as Commissioners. Executive Director Campany noted that neither the WRC Bylaws or Rules of Procedure spoke explicitly about non-Commissioner committee member voting and suggested that clarification could be made in the Rules of Procedure. The Board was in unanimous agreement that the Full Commission should be
asked to amend the Rules of Procedure to no longer allow non-Commissioner committee members the ability to vote and count against quorum.

**Commissioner Host for Legislative Brownbag Meetings:** Executive Director Campany asked the Board to consider whether or not a Commissioner should host the Monday lunchtime discussions with legislators hosted by the WRC. Chair Ciuffreda explained that in the past the chair of the former Public Policy and Legislative Committee would host the meeting, and after that Committee was dissolved by the Executive Board, the role fell to a Commissioner volunteer. Chris explained that Commissioner attendance could be unpredictable, and that he or other senior staff could assume the role of host. He also suggested that a regular attendee is Commissioner Stephan Chait of Halifax, and that the Board might ask him to serve as host when he was in attendance. The Board agreed that Commissioner Chait should be asked to host when present but that staff could otherwise assume that role.

**Windham Region Broadband Project Update:** Executive Director Campany provided the Board with an update on the project prepared by Senior Planner Sue Westa. He explained that multiple messages had been sent to towns inviting them to the project kickoff meeting scheduled for January 16th, to be followed by a town survey training session scheduled for February 6th. Concern was voiced about confusion generated by other community broadband initiatives in the region. Chris expressed his hope that now that the regional broadband project was getting underway that confusion might be cleared up. This project will be the primary agenda item at the January Full Commission meeting.

**Regional Plan Update:** Executive Director Campany explained that the multiple staffing changes over the past 15 months had delayed the intended regional plan update process. He presented to the Board a proposal to do a minor regional plan update over the next 15 months to then create room for a major plan update. The current plan will expire in September 2022. He proposed that the major update would focus on:

- Where should compact settlement be directed as a matter of policy (i.e., where will and should growth go when it comes)? This could include the development of planning models for each of the compact settlements.
- What is necessary to achieve compact settlement in terms of both policy and implementation strategies?
- What policy and strategies are necessary to make compact settlements climate resilient, with flooding and fluvial erosion as principal concerns?
- What policies and strategies are necessary to prevent forest fragmentation and to maintain and improve habitat connectivity?

The Board felt this was a good approach and asked that Chris present the proposal to the Full Commission.

**New Appointments:** None.

**Executive Director Report:** Executive Director Campany explained that he’d been asked to provide background testimony on community resilience before the House Energy and Telecommunications Committee as related to H.688, The Vermont Global Warming Solutions Act of 2020. He also explained that he had participated in the presentation of the Southern Vermont Working Communities proposal before a state committee of the Boston Federal Reserve Bank. The proposal, developed by the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation, would support conditions for asylum
seekers and other legal immigrants to more easily transition into living and working in southern Vermont. This has been an element of the regional and southern Vermont Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies and a discussion within the Southeast Vermont Economic Development Strategies for years.

**Public Comments:** None.

**Review of Action Items from Meeting:** Not reviewed.

**Adjournment:** On a motion by Commissioner Arsenault, seconded by Commissioner Astley, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ashley Collins