Executive Board  
June 14, 2011  
WRC Conference Room

Commissioners Present: Melinda Bussino, Elaine Beckwith, Corky Elwell, John Whitman, Jodi French, Carolyn Partridge  
Excused: Norm Wright, Fred Bullock, Tom Buchanan, John Kristensen,  
Staff Present: Chris Campany, Mike Shaughnessy, Ashley Collins  
Convened: 7:06pm

Administrative Reports:  
Secretary’s Report: On a motion by Jodi, seconded by John W., the minutes of the May meeting were approved.  
Treasurer’s Report: On a motion by Jodi, seconded by Elaine, the Treasurer’s Report was approved.

Action Item: The Natural Resources Committee (NRC) Purpose and Objective Statement has been approved by the Committee and submitted to Executive Board for approval. On a motion by Jodi, seconded by Elaine, the NRC’s Purpose and Objective Statement was approved.

Executive Director’s Report & Other Business:  
1) Website: Chris gave a brief overview of the new website to be launched this week. The overall feedback was positive, with a few suggestions related to draft minutes being posted, or finding an alternate password protected section on the web so committee members can access draft minutes or review documents. The alternate password protection section idea will be pursued if there is a perceived need. Already established services such as Google Docs may provide a simpler, less time intensive solution. The new domain name for the WRC website is www.windhamregional.org.

2) June Full Commission Meeting: Chris mentioned that the June meeting will take place in Halifax. The guest speakers will be Windham County Sheriff Keith Clark, who will talk about the Community Emergency Response Team, and WRC emergency planner Dinah Reed, who will speak about town involvement in the development of key emergency planning tools. During the last meeting of the LEPC, Sheriff Clark noted that CERT was at risk of losing their volunteers if they were not used.

3) July Full Commission Meeting: It was agreed that there will be no Full Commission meeting held in July. The next meeting will be the annual business meeting in August, which will be held at the Newbrook Fire Station. September’s Full Commission meeting will also be the WRC annual dinner. An effort is underway to recruit Governor Shumlin to be the guest speaker.
Somerset Supervisor: The new supervisor for Somerset, Larry Cassidy, met with Chris and Susan about his responsibilities in Somerset, and his interest in updating the town plan. He is in the process of scheduling a meeting with Somerset residents to discuss their issues and priorities.

FY 2012 Budget Formulation: Chris and Mike explained that FY 2012 budget formulation process is underway. The primary focus of this discussion was around the use of our core funding from the state. This year we’re likely to run a deficit as we deal with an unanticipated but substantial increase in health insurance, and as we adjust our program and operations to the realities of the aggregate 18 percent decrease in our core funding from the state over the last two years. Three processes are being implemented in an effort to bring our operations into line with our anticipated revenue. First, budget assumptions will be based upon realistic revenue and cost estimates, coupled with our experience implementing our programs. Staff met twice for an extended period of time to review actual hours expended over the past year to determine what allocation of ours among programs seemed reasonable. This provided a draft initial core budget to be reviewed by the Finance Committee and Executive Board. Second, revised staff performance evaluation measures will reflect ability to perform quality work within budget expectations, as well as ability to adapt to change and demonstrate initiative. Third, each WRC Committee will be given a budget/staff time allocation for the year, and will be provided with monthly updates on the status of their allocation. Because the work of the Commission is largely Committee-driven, it is important that the Committees actively participate in the stewardship of WRC resources and manage their work within the constraints of those resources. This will also allow the Executive Board to quickly respond to unforeseen changes to the work agenda of the Commission and related resource allocation issues. Mike presented a preliminary core program budget organized largely around staff hour allocations to programs. There was good discussion, with no major reservations voiced. A refined draft budget will be presented to the Executive Board at its July meeting, and the final FY 2012 budget will be presented to the Full Commission at its annual business meeting in August.

Committee Reports:

Brownfields: Committee minutes were distributed for review. There was some brief discussion on the EPA awarding the Brownfields fund $1.4 Million. Staffs were commended by the Executive Board on their work on the proposal, and the strength of the program.

Community Development: There was no meeting, but it was mentioned that the next meeting will take place on June 23rd at which staff will propose a regional screening of “Blood in This Town”; a documentary of Rutland’s drive to revitalize during America’s deep economic crisis.

Energy: Committee minutes were distributed for review, after which John W. gave a brief overview of the June 9th meeting of the State Comprehensive Energy Plan, in Springfield, VT. Chris suggested that the Committee take some time at some point in the future to discuss the implications of the possibility of natural gas being brought as far south as Rutland from Quebec. Recognizing the environmental consequences associated with “fracking” in the development of natural gas resources, what does it mean if a substantial portion of the state has access to natural gas, but Southeast Vermont does not?

Finance: The Finance Committee met Monday, June 13th to discuss the present financial status of the WRC and the proposed core program budget described in the Executive Director’s report above.
LEPC: Committee minutes were distributed for review, after which Corky briefly outlined the main topics. He mentioned that regional staff from the Homeland Security High Risk Facility Group outlined and explained their responsibilities. It was also noted that the Community Emergency Response Team is available for town use, and that if they’re not utilized there is a risk of losing well-trained volunteers. It was also mentioned that the State Veterinarian spoke at the last LEPC meeting about the management and accommodation of animals during an emergency.

Natural Resources: Committee minutes were distributed for review. There was little attendance at the latest meeting, where John W. showed a video on the Vermont Working Landscape Partnership by the Vermont Council on Rural Development (video can be found here: http://vtrural.org/). John reported the passage on an energy bill and there may be some potential applications for natural resources within this bill. The June meeting has been cancelled due to no pressing business at this time; and the July meeting has been changed from the 20th to the 13th. John explained that the August meeting will have three guest speakers’ present discussing forestry issues, and it might be useful to get the meeting notice out to the Full Commission to try and get a higher attendance for the speakers.

Nominating: Carolyn e-mailed the Executive Board as well as Citizen Interest Commissioners to see who would like to continue their term, or who would like to resign. At this time John Whitman has announced he would like to resign at the end of this term. All others present have agreed to continue with their assignments. She mentioned that she would discuss with Chris the Solid Waste and Recycling Citizen Interest Commissioner position.

Project Review: The June meeting was cancelled as there was no pressing business at this time. Elaine mentioned that there was a Scoping Meeting for the Blue Heron Hydro project. Comments have been submitted, and they were a reiteration on comments that were made previously.

Transportation: Committee minutes from the May meeting were distributed for review.

Planning Coordination:  
Public Policy & Leg:  
No Meetings

On a motion by Carolyn, seconded by Jodi the committee reports were accepted.

Jodi moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by John W.  
Meeting Adjourned: 8:25pm

Respectfully Submitted,  
Ashley Collins