WRC TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
14 March 2011
WRC Brattleboro

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM.

ATTENDANCE
Jack Cunningham    Susan Clark (VTrans)    Kendall Gifford (staff)
Fred Bullock       Gary Fox                Matt Mann (staff)
Lou Brusso         Mary Habig             Rep Mollie Burke

Regrets: Lew Sorenson

MINUTES APPROVAL
February minutes were approved with one correction: Edgar Rice was present and Jack Cunningham was not.

BUSINESS

Discussion with Mollie Burke

Mollie provided a handout, and gave a more detailed summary of activities to date in the House Transportation Committee. She entertained concurrent questions and comments from the members present. Some of the issues covered were:

- Passenger rail to Montreal is on the top of the governor’s list. Mollie made note of our members comment on the lack of Vermont connectivity at the out of state Amtrak stations, and on the need for improving Amtrak’s capacity for carrying skis and bicycles.
- Bridges with low structural sufficiency ratings will continue to be a priority. Both Mollie and Sue Clark emphasized the value of the RPC reviews of local projects. Without this money may well be poorly targeted.
- Discussed the Youth Services initiative which originated in Brattleboro with a study that identified transportation as a very high concern among young people.
- There is a bill, with strong support in the House, that would add sidewalks to eligible projects list for the Town Highways Structures Program.
- Mollie said she was dismayed to learn that the $12 rail ticket for Vermonters is not being mentioned to customers unless they inquire about it specifically. She will do what she can, but urged the Committee to help publicize it.
• Mollie reported that the new transportation fuel tax has collected significant additional revenue – all of which is legislatively and contractually committed to transportation expenditures. The members voiced concern about the state’s history of “raiding” the transportation fund to subsidize the general fund.
• Mollie reported that a State of Maine study found bicycle tourism contributes $36 million to that state’s economy.

Prioritize the Town Highway Bridge Candidate List
Committee first considered a distributed list of candidates that remained from the list compiled in April 2010. Matt said that Guilford did not submit bridge number 58, which crosses Watsons Brook, on their prioritized list. Jack Cunningham asked the Committee to consider Wardsboro Bridge #28 over Wardsboro Brook at the junction with Route 100. Matt reported that Townshend suggested additional potential candidates, but the information provided by the Town was insufficient to identify the bridges, and had only arrived today -- too late to obtain the necessary identifying information. After some discussion a motion was made to submit to VTrans the list of remaining candidates from the April 2010 list, but without the Guilford bridge #58, and with the addition of the Wardsboro bridge #28; prioritized as the eight bridge. The motion was seconded, and passed unanimously without further discussion.

Next meeting will be on the 11th of April. Guest speaker will be Kevin Russell from VTrans Enhancement Program

Meeting adjourned at 6:00