

**APPROVED – MINUTES
NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
June 15, 2022**

Held in-person and via Zoom, an in-person quorum was present

Members Present:

Jason Hennessey, Amherst
Will Ludt, Amherst
Danielle Pray, Amherst
Tamara Sorell, Brookline
Venu Rao, Hollis
James Battis, Hudson (Treasurer)
Brett Gagnon, Hudson (via Zoom)
Ralph Boehm, Litchfield
Kim Queenan, Litchfield (Vice Chair)
Charlie Post, Lyndeborough
Karin Elmer, Merrimack

Tim Tenhave, Merrimack (Chair)
Chris Costantino, Milford (via Zoom)
Janet Langdell, Milford
John Shannon, Milford (via Zoom)
Tim Berry, Mont Vernon
Camille Correa, City of Nashua
Jeff Gowan, Pelham (via Zoom)
Dave Hennessey, Pelham
Peter Howd, Wilton
Kermit Williams, Wilton

Others Present:

Danielle Pray, Amherst
William Rose, NH DOT (via Zoom)

Staff Present:

Jay Minkarah, Executive Director
Camille Pattison, Assistant Director
Matt Waitkins, Senior Transportation Planner
Kristin Wardner, Administrative Assistant

1. Welcome and Introductions

Tenhave opened the meeting at 7:01 p.m. with introductions.

2. Privilege of the Floor

No members of the public were present to speak.

3. Approval of Minutes – March 16, 2022

Amendments:

- Page 1, Add initial in front of “Hennessey” in minutes motion

Ludt motioned, with a second from Battis,

THAT the minutes of March 16, 2022, be approved as amended and placed on file. A roll call vote was conducted. Rose, Gowan, Boehm, Post, and Berry abstained.

The motion **carried**.

Kermit Williams arrived at 7:05pm.

4. Annual Business Meeting

a. FY2023 Budget and Work Program

Minkarah provided an overview of the of the proposed FY 2023 budget including:

Dues are level; this amount was approved last fiscal year. NRPC received a \$500,000 Brownfields grant and the proposed is an estimate of FY23 usage; Received an award to update the Regional Plan, the funds of which will be spread over at least 2 years; Includes the remaining funding (\$100k for 2 years) for Regional Housing Needs Assessment which will need to be completed by end of calendar year. HHW reduction is due to the fluctuation in the number of events in the fiscal year. Local contracts include a number of mostly small projects, as well as circuit riders with 5 towns; of note is a new project this year: the Nashua Sidewalk Assessment. The UPWP is a two-year contract, FY23 is the second year of the contract so variances are a carryover of remaining funds. Minkarah noted that the UPWP is NRPC's largest funding source and the document outlining the work to be done can be found on NRPC's website. NRPC received a grant to hire a full time Regional Mobility Manager. Langdell noted that this position will work with the Regional Coordination Council (RCC) and the State Coordinating Council (SCC) to strengthen community transportation. There is a year left in the grant and it is unsure if it will be extended but Minkarah stated that even if not, the hope is for NRPC to continue to funding mobility management through the UPWP because it is critical to the region.

Highlights of proposed expenses include: Increase in Capital Equipment for vehicle replacement of the NRPC van, which is currently 10 years old; server replacement; and advanced traffic counting technology. In response to Williams, Minkarah stated the Principal Transportation Planner position is still vacant and the position is being budgeted for. IT Services increase is due to the need to go with a 3rd party service rather than the staff member NRPC has been relying on. Rent and utilities are increasing; salary increases include new Mobility Manager and staff increases. Minkarah explained that the Reserve Fund increase is because they allocate what they think they will need each year and that the balance fluctuates regularly; Tenhave added it allows for flexibility if expected receipts aren't received and for unanticipated expenses.

Williams motioned, with a second from Battis,

THAT the Nashua Regional Planning Commission FY 2023 Budget be approved as presented. A roll call vote was conducted with all in favor.

The motion **carried.**

b. Annual Grant and Contract Authorization

Minkarah explained that on an annual basis the full Commission must affirm that the Executive Director is authorized to file applications, sign contracts, and implement the annual work program.

J. Hennessey motioned, with a second from Battis,

THAT the Executive Director be authorized to file applications with federal, state, and local governmental units and other agencies to implement the FY 2023 work program of the Commission, and to execute agreements to receive funds for such purposes. A roll call vote was conducted with all in favor.

The motion **carried.**

c. Setting of FY 2024 Dues

Minkarah stated dues are NRPC's largest source of funding that can be used with discretion, and they have been flat for 12 years. Currently, 72% of dues goes towards matching grants, most significantly NH DOT funding. Also, budgeted from dues every year is about \$10,000 for the energy aggregation program, \$10,000 for tax mapping, and \$15,000 for technical assistance. He explained salaries and expenses are increasing; he is proposing a 5% increase for FY 2024 dues. Dues are based on a formula using population, equalized assessed valuation and % of region; the increase would be \$8,150 total.

Williams motioned, with a second from Battis,

THAT the Nashua Regional Planning Commission FY 2024 Dues Assessment be approved as presented with a 5% increase. A roll call vote was conducted with all in favor.

The motion **carried.**

d. Election of FY 2023 Executive Committee Officers

The Executive Committee recommends the following officer positions:

Tim Tenhave, Chair

Kim Queenan, Vice Chair

Jim Battis, Treasurer

Boehm motioned, with a second from Pray,

THAT the Nashua Regional Planning Commission approve the Executive Committee officers as recommended by the Executive Committee. A roll call vote was conducted with all in favor.

The motion **carried.**

5. **MPO Policy Committee**

- a. Public Hearing: Approval of TIP Amendment #4 to the adopted Nashua Metropolitan Area 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). NRPC will also amend the 2019-2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) project list and fiscal constraint analysis to maintain consistency with the amended TIP project list.

Prior to the public hearing, Waitkins reviewed the three primary transportation planning documents: the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Ten Year Plan (TYP) and the Long-Range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). Minkarah explained the reason amendments to the TIP are needed.

Tenhave opened the public hearing at 7:56pm.

No members of the public were present to speak.

Waitkins referenced the memo provided in the meeting agenda packet and summarized that the amendment was received from the NH Department of Transportation (NH DOT) and NRPC is expected to amend the TIP to account for changes to projects within the Nashua region and maintain consistency with the Statewide TIP (STIP). NRPC will also amend the 2021-2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) project list and fiscal constraint analysis to maintain consistency with the amended TIP project list. Waitkins summarized the changes to the TIP described in the memo and stated that during the public comment period they did receive additional information regarding increased Nashua Transit System (NTS) FTA5310 funding. The Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) voted to recommend the adoption of the amendment at their June 8, 2022, meeting and NRPC staff recommends MPO approval.

Tenhave closed the public hearing at 8:11pm.

Battis motioned with a second from D. Hennessey,

THAT TIP Amendment #4 to the adopted Nashua Metropolitan Area 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) be approved and to amend the 2021-2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) project list and fiscal constraint analysis to maintain consistency with the amended TIP project list, be approved. A roll call vote was conducted, with J. Hennessey abstaining.

The motion **carried.**

b. TYP Project Solicitation

Waitkins explained that Ten Year Plan project solicitation has begun for the 2025-2035 TYP. They are updated every 2 years and the one updated 2 years ago will become law shortly. Memos were sent out to communities with all the details on June 3rd. He reviewed the website page created for this process and he and Minkarah reviewed the timeline and the types of eligible projects. The website can be referenced for more specifics and project scoring and selection criteria; NRPC staff is available for assistance throughout the process. Elmer noted that commissioners cannot bring projects forward; the submission is vetted through the town, with one point of contact. Minkarah stated community support is critical, especially since these many of these projects require matches. Rose stated that the region will be allocated like the past plan at around \$6 million. Rose stated that communities should bring projects forward to NRPC even if they don't meet the threshold of the TYP.

c. Transportation Project Updates

This agenda item was skipped due to time.

Karin Elmer left the meeting at 8:34pm.

6. General Updates

a. New NRPC Website

Minkarah reviewed the NRPC new website which went live on June 1st and urged commissioners to look at it and provide any feedback. Camille Pattison pointed out new pages created for each community. Williams mentioned he found it difficult to find live maps and tax maps.

b. Revision of the Statement of Strategy

Tenhaven explained the Statement of Strategy that outlines how the Commission does business and it is out of date – it should be updated every 5 years and it has been 6. The Executive Committee will bring forward a path to update it in September.

7. Commissioners Roundtable

Hudson – Gagnon stated support for conservation efforts and sustainability is increasing in town.

Milford – Langdell stated the Planning Board is seeing a number of large residential developments and small businesses.

Amherst – Pray said the Master Plan is almost complete; the large warehouse proposal in Amherst has been scrapped. There has been PFAS found in various parts of town, so they are providing bottled water to those affected. There is a small cluster around the fire station.

Litchfield – Queenan stated that Pennichuck Water is hooking up to public water or providing home filtration device to those households with PFAS contaminated wells. The town is in preliminary stages of an archaeological survey across from Merrimack. The Town Administrator has given his notice. She thanked Jay for his CIP assistance. Boehm discussed HB400 which is an affordable housing bill which would allow municipalities to combine land and build housing.

Lyndeborough – no update

Brookline – no update

Mont Vernon – Berry stated that the median sales price of houses has increased 17% between 2020 and 2021 and that Mont Vernon has the 20th highest tax rate in the state.

Wilton – Williams stated Wilton had 3 red list bridges (one was completed last year). He stated one of the bridges has qualified for federal funding under the new infrastructure bill. He asked if anyone has experience with that. Tenhaven suggested he contact Kyle Fox in Merrimack.

Pelham – D. Hennessey stated they are working on Pelham's Master Plan; hope to be done by end of year. The Council of Aging at Senior Center will be dedicating a kiosk on 6/23 – they have fundraised over 80k for programs during the pandemic. The farmers market will be open for the second year every Saturday.

Nashua – no update

Merrimack – Tenhaven stated a trail plan created by the Town Center Committee, which creates an east/west corridor for pedestrians, is moving forward. The funding is coming from NH DOT dollars from projects not completed and some town funding.

8. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn was made by Battis with a second from Boehm, all in favor. The meeting ended at 9:01 p.m.

The next Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 21, 2022, at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristin Wardner, Administrative Assistant