

## ECVEDD Board Meeting

### Minutes of Thursday, January 28, 2021 Board Meeting (Zoom meeting / Conference Call)

Members present: Bob Haynes, GMEDC – President; Tom Kennedy, MARC – Vice President; Bob Flint, SRDC – Treasurer; Peter Gregory, TRORC – Secretary; Joshua “Bushrod” Powers; Marvin Harrison; Walter Martone; Carol Lighthall; PJ Skehan; Joan Goldstein; Jerry Fredrickson; Kristi Morris; Sam Hooper

Others present: Mark Condon, GMEDC; Peter Berger; Allison Hopkins, MARC; Sarah Wraight, TRORC; Erika Hoffman-Keiss, GMEDC

1. Bob Haynes called the meeting to order at 3:02 PM.
2. Public Comments: None received.
3. Review of minutes from June 26, 2020 Board meeting: Jerry Fredrickson moved to approve the June 26<sup>th</sup> minutes as presented. Joshua Powers seconded the motion. So moved.
4. Bylaw Adoption: Peter Gregory summarized the edits being submitted to the Board for consideration:
  - Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission’s name was changed to Mount Ascutney Regional Commission (MARC).
  - The Secretary position, which was originally constituted as a staff position, has been codified as an elected position that rotates between core partners, as has been the standing practice.Kristi Morris moved to adopt the revised Bylaws. Sam Hooper seconded. So moved.
5. Board Matters: The partners confirmed that the Executive Committee now has 9 members, in accordance with the Bylaws. Adolfo Bailon will be leaving the Board soon, though his departure date is still to be determined. Peter Berger confirmed his interest in joining the Board after Adolfo leaves. The nomination will be deferred until the next Board meeting.
6. FY21 Grant and Supplemental Grant Project Status Reports by Partners

### GMEDC



- Erika Hoffman-Keiss will replace Bob Haynes effective April 1, 2021. She has been working part time for GMEDC, providing technical assistance to businesses around COVID challenges. She will begin full-time at GMEDC starting February 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Staff have been providing technical assistance to businesses with the help of an AmeriCorps VISTA who processed economic recovery grants.
- Staff helped to manage a grant program in Hartford; businesses received \$2,000 grants from the Hartford Business Revolving Loan Fund.
- Staff worked to support the development of a digitally-focused innovation hub in Randolph.

## MARC

- 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Planning Grant:
  - Staff are updating the health section and Economic Development chapter of MARC's Regional Plan.
  - Staff are providing direct health and wellness planning support to Towns, especially through food access planning for the Town of Ludlow and providing health chapter templates for Town Plans.
  - As a partner for the Mt Ascutney Community Health Implementation Plan Food Security Working Group, MARC staff worked with TRORC and 211 to advocate for a regional food system analysis to be one of their 4 implementation projects.
  - Staff work with Rise VT on wellness projects and planning and with prevention partners on recovery friendly communities.
  - Staff are assisting Towns with grant applications for outdoor recreation and other community facilities.
  - MARC is providing information to Towns to help them navigate the opt-in / opt-out process for Act 164 legislation (relating to cannabis).
  - MARC continues its grant administration and reporting duties.
- Supplemental Grant:
  - Staff are updating MARC's website content relating to COVID.
  - MARC works with TRORC, the Department of Public Service, and the Center for Rural Innovation to identify areas that are underserved by existing broadband networks and to expand service. MARC recently hired a new staff person who will spend 50% of her time on broadband work.
  - MARC supports Town energy committees and telecommunications committees to access available grants.



## SRDC

- Staff support the VeggieVanGo project in Windsor.
- SRDC continues its regular capacity building efforts.
- SRDC continues to partner with Black River Innovation Campus on a variety of projects, including a December entrepreneurial event that had 50 virtual attendees.
- SRDC applied for a large EDA construction grant related to BRIC. The application was unsuccessful but SRDC continues to pursue other funding opportunities. The VT Community Foundation has contributed \$300,000.
- Staff continue to prepare data updates for the region. SRDC is currently updating the regional database that tracks housing sales by town by year.
- Staff are helping the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) to review business grant applications, and are supporting the Restart Vermont technical assistance program.
- SRDC works with SBDC to provide outreach on available resources, and convenes weekly meetings with partners to share that information.

## TRORC

- 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Planning Grant:
  - Staff have been supporting regional emergency management planning activities, including support to municipalities.
  - Staff responding to business inquiries on support programs at the state and federal levels.
  - TRORC staff continued to support the regional creative economy network and interface with statewide counterparts for outreach, an economic impact study, and a vision planning process.
  - Staff developed, launched, and presented a new Health Policy Clearinghouse to towns and health professionals.
  - Staff also presented research on recovery-friendly communities to a substance misuse prevention workgroup.
- Supplemental Grant:
  - Staff have assisted small businesses in accessing state emergency assistance.
  - Staff have provided technical assistance and outreach to towns to support creation of new WIFI hot spots and fiber expansion.
  - Staff have started some initial conversations about how to structure a regional resilience plan, and will be reaching out to the EDD partners later in the spring for input on plan content.



7. Treasurer's Report: Bob Flint presented a financial report through December 31, 2020, accounting for grant award income and expenses. As of 12/31/20, there was \$4,474.96 in the checking account. Jerry Fredrickson moved to accept the report as presented, and Sam Hooper seconded. So moved.

8. Other Business:

Joan Goldstein was asked for any updates she might have from the state. She shared that her team has been busy defending the Governor's budget in the Statehouse. The proposed budget includes:

- a \$25 million package for brownfields redevelopment (split between the Agency of Natural Resources and ACCD)
- technology-based economic development funding, leveraging University of Vermont research capabilities
- a "mini-TIF" program to support small municipalities that can't otherwise secure bonding for infrastructure projects.
- a program to enhance trade links with Quebec.
- a program to recruit workers to come to the state, through remote and in-person work.
- housing initiatives: rehabilitation, manufactured housing tax credits, etc.
- a program to streamline the manufacturer's sales and use tax exemption on equipment

Attendees briefly discussed vaccine mandates potentially being incorporated into company policies. Jerry Fredrickson recommended that businesses reach out to their trade associations for guidance.

9. Adjourned: Tom Kennedy made a motion at 3:38 PM to adjourn the meeting. Jerry Fredrickson seconded. So moved.

