



## MINUTES

May 5, 2022

Meeting Held via ZOOM

Present: Bonnie Waninger, Ed Bove, Dave Snedeker, Catherine Dimitruk, Charlie Baker, Jim Sullivan, Adam Lougee, Jason Rasmussen, Peter Gregory, Tasha Wallis

Guests: Al Wakefield and Bob Harnish for the Vermont Inclusion discussion

1. Minutes and Treasurer's Report

Motion by Baker to approve the April Minutes and the May Treasurer's Report. Second by Dimitruk. Passed unanimously.

2. Regional Planning Commission Funding – Discussion

Gregory reported on increased budget levels for RPCs, including the increase in the base ACCD grant and reviewed the proposal/compromise developed by Baker regarding how the increase and bylaw modernization funds are/are not juxtaposed under various scenarios. Gregory has been and continues to work with legislators and ACCD staff to ensure that everyone is on the same page and that the allocations are rational. Overall, base RPC funding for next FY expected to increase by about \$1.49 million. Discussion ensued as to the amounts and relationships between the RPC and Municipal Planning Grant appropriations (and how both relate to bylaw modernization). Noted that implications for FY 2024 are not clear; will have to stay on it to be sure that the base increase carries forward.

3. Vermont Inclusion Initiative/Week

Al Wakefield and Bob Harnish were present to provide an update on the Declaration of Inclusion and their goal of having Vermont known as a state that embraces inclusivity – a welcoming state of welcoming communities. Suggested that people be referred to the program's website:

<https://vtdeclarationofinclusion.org> .

Forty-four towns have adopted a declaration. Inclusion Week is next week with activities happening around the state; VSECU, VT Arts Council, and others sponsoring events. Al, Bob, and

others are continuing to support adoption by additional towns, businesses, and organizations. They encouraged more RPCs to adopt the Declaration.

#### 4. VAPDA Retreat Planning

Bonnie reported on progress; looking at locations in/near Chittenden County (Sleepy Hollow?). Noted paramount importance of access to quality craft beers.

#### 5. Committee Reports

- Planning and Economic Development – Adam. Sent out draft ACCD work plan with changes noted. New items:
  - Land use planning initiative. VAPDA study committee to look at regional land use mapping and report on possible ways to make land use designations, including regional land use maps, more consistent among RPCs. Discussed possibility of initially focusing on an examination of existing plans and maps to identify issues and develop an understanding of differences and whether/how it would be useful to create greater uniformity statewide. VAPDA okayed Adam agreeing with some modified language around process, timeline, and constitution of the study committee.
  - Designated Area Assessment task – will there be an assessment and how RPCs should participate.
  - Noted that the Pandemic Response/Plan Implementation task should be continued as the funding runs for up to three years.
  - VPIC – it would be a good idea to identify needed updates and sources of funding. Discussed for the 29<sup>th</sup> time whether information should be housed at separate VPIC site or at VAPDA site, with previous arguments rehashed and no decision made for the 29<sup>th</sup> time.
  - Equity and Environmental Justice task/activities discussed – noted examples of what can be included and the relevance of the health and transportation equity initiatives all RPCs are working on.
- Natural Resources – Charlie.
  - Noted upcoming CWSP (not Quake) meeting.
  - Continuing to work on issues with watershed groups, conservation districts, and DEC.
  - Discussed efforts to study/integrate ARPA and Infrastructure funding into DEC water and wastewater grant/loan programs.
  - 604b paperwork done – thanks to RRPC.
  - Discussed cost-effectiveness of various clean water projects, including potential agricultural initiatives and what can/can't be done on/with farms (where effectiveness of CW investments tend to be greatest).

- Emergency Management – Catherine.
  - VAPDA EM committee meeting with new VEM Director of Planning.
  - Discussion of possible new local hazard mitigation plan/module – not FEMA approved, necessarily – that would be simpler and could still come with an ERAF benefit.
  - Hot weather planning program – get proposals in!
  
- Transportation. TPI Guidance is coming out; VAPDA comments submitted and considered. Noted regional bike-ped work element and additional \$400K funding!
  
- Energy – Jim.
  - H.518 (Municipal Building Energy Resilience) moving forward with RPC funding for local project management and coordination. Some concern that the program, as envisioned by BGS, is moving toward an emphasis on large buildings and projects, potentially at the expense of simpler projects involving smaller buildings in rural towns. Also, issue with program beginning with BGS putting out an RFP for \$5 million in municipal energy assessments and how that is likely to delay much of the RPC work, resulting in timeline challenges. All agreed it would be beneficial to have a separate approach for small rural towns (e.g., simple energy assessments of town halls, basic air-sealing work, and addition of alternative heating system like heat pumps – quick and effective, while also widespread throughout the state). Sullivan will work with Wallis to attempt to get VAPDA at the table as the program guidelines are developed.
  - Presented information from recent work with PSD on:
    - LEAP data for regional and local plans (will be looking for some basic RPC data to allow full regionalization of the data in June-July with projected data release in August);
    - Electricity Generation modeling (new spreadsheet system allowing disaggregation of data to regional and even local levels, choice of targets based on varying assumptions re amount of total electricity supply from imports, and inclusion of regional/subregional grid and transmission constraints as a check on viability of targets by location...will be looking for some basic data from RPCs in July);
    - Mapping renewable energy resources (most constraint layers the same, but with some new qualifiers around forest blocks and need to make decisions about whether/how to re-do renewable energy potential base layers, especially given availability of new LIDAR data for solar – Sullivan to recruit some RPC staff for a discussion with PSD and VCGI);
    - Revised Act 174 Guidelines proposal expected in June.
  
- Health – Ed.
  - Health Equity project moving along; planners have started meeting and collaborating.

- Climate – Catharine.
  - Equity and Resilience toolkits being developed.
  - Voiced only tepid enthusiasm about prospects for reappointment to the Climate Council.
- Government Affairs – Tom Kennedy.
  - Act 250 reform bill headed to veto.
  - Brownfields - lots of EPA assessment money if state funding doesn't develop as hoped, but noted benefits of state program.
  - Expect several vetoes of major legislation, likely including the budget, and an override session.

Meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 11:52 AM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jim Sullivan