

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
MINUTES**

**SOUTHERN MAINE PLANNING and DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

**9:00 AM  
February 27, 2020**

**In attendance were:** Chairman Perry Ellsworth, Vice Chairman Jan Williams, Treasurer Richard Dutremble, Chris Osterrieder, Gary Lamb, Werner Gilliam, Jim Nimon, Kendra Amaral, Beth Della Valle, Paul Schumacher, Executive Director and Dave DiPerri

**Absent:** Denise Clavette, Greg Tansley, Pat Finnigan and Cristina Forsyth

**1. Minutes of January 29, 2020 Executive Committee meeting**

*Jim Nimon made the motion to accept the minutes of January 29, 2020 as edited as per discussion and the motion was seconded by Richard Dutremble. **Approved Unanimously.***

**2. Treasurer's Report**

A QB Balance Sheet as of the end of January was reviewed. There isn't much to discuss with it as everything is running smoothly.

Will Armitage provided a Brownfields Aging Report and it listed an amount due of \$48,087.47 from the NorthDam loan. This amount due is a balloon payment from the maturity date of the first loan. Paul wants to have Will at the next meeting to discuss how this board wants to deal with maturity dates of loans as we have a few coming up shortly. He would like to have some direction as to refinance, extend loans with or without interest only and for how long of a duration. Should this discussion be through the Finance Committee or the Executive Committee? It was asked that maybe Doug Sanford could get Market financing now. Let's discuss this at the next meeting and have Will Armitage available. *Beth Della Valle made the motion to accept the Treasurer's Report and Jan Williams seconded the motion. **Approved Unanimously.***

**3. Sustainability Coordinator**

Karina Graeter attended and was introduced to the committee. Karina is our new Sustainability Coordinator. This 2-year pilot program is be funded by six towns and she will be assisting Abbie Sherwin with coastal resiliency work. Karina will be featured in the Maine Townsman next month. Karina told the committee that she met with the managers of the six towns and discussed their needs and goals and how can we accomplish their needs within two years. Karina's goals are to 1) create a community frame work with strategies such as: what was done in the past, what they are working on now and what they want to do in the future. 2) Identity common actions and begin a regional effort. 3) Help with Greenhouse Gasses to reduce the carbon footprint and create our own data base. She would like to become a member of ICLEI.

Beth Della Valle stated that Sanford is working on their comp plan and would like to have some targeted information/issues and focus on Energy. Karina is hoping that after two years, she could share the data collected with other towns and the county. Karina has obtained a working and viable Sustainability Program document from Chicago and is going to incorporate our region's needs into it. Beth Della Valle asked Karina for periodic updates. Kendra Amaral agreed that projects such as a solar farm using property in Kittery, would not be a good idea. But if it another town had it, then Kittery could invest into theirs. Do a joint venture.

Karina told the committee that she was originally from Ohio and was living outside of Bangor until getting this job and moving to Kennebunk. Her background is in Climate Change thru Dartmouth College. She traveled to Greenland and studied the ice melting change.

#### **4. Casella Space**

The committee did a walk-through of the Casella space and met back in the conference room for discussion. It was felt that though a larger and beautiful space, that all the offices were Executive offices and not sure if this was necessary for all our staff. Bernie Saulners has offered a monthly rent of \$5,000 for the 4200 sq ft space at \$14.25 a sq ft, \$60,000/year. Presently, we are paying \$3,002.00 for 3,100 sq ft, \$40,000. It was felt that we should contact try to lease through Casella by ourselves or with a realtor. Discussion continued about: designated parking included, Casella subsidizing rent, Casella leaving furniture and/or purchasing it, increase amount after our 5-year lease is up in December, renegotiate lease terms, not only assume Casella's remaining 3-years, but negotiate a new lease with Saulners.

Paul spoke about the two smaller offices on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor that would separate staff for \$400 & \$600/month. Kendra Amaral suggested we move our Conference Room downstairs and build-out two offices in the existing conference room. Consensus of the Committee was to get more information with the exact prices, etc. and put on a spreadsheet for next meeting.

#### **5. Electronic Meetings**

Paul was a bit confused about this issue so he asked our attorney for her opinion. Paul would like to offer remote attendance to meetings in order to possibly get members from Oxford County.

- Zoom: As SMPDC is encouraging our region to "Go Green," remote meeting participation would assist in lowering transportation gasses, etc. The Zoom program's monthly cost is \$14.99 a month, but internet access is necessary. Dave DiPerri told the committee that he uses this program almost daily to run his accounting business with clients and recommends it. Dave also told the members that you can share documents via computers, which is a very affective product.
- Satellite Location: As some of our Oxford towns do not have internet access, it was suggested that we offer a satellite location (library, town hall, etc.) so internet access would be available.

A few of the committee members were concerned about voting without being present. They are not sure if remote attendance would meet quorum requirements. It was felt that members being visual for meetings would be better as you can see their faces and moods and build relationships with each other.

- Another option would be having an alternate attend meetings in the member's absence. Both of these options would require updating our By-laws.

It was felt that an alternate would not be familiar with the things we do such as the Brownfields Program, etc. so it would be difficult for them to act/vote knowledgably. By allowing an alternative, it would building relationships for working together in the future.

It was suggested that Paul send out a survey to the committee members asking for their input and opinions. Also SMPDC is a high-level group, and we should expand our membership. Paul was asked to research the Zoom program and present at next meeting. It was suggested that Paul check with the Federal Brownfields Program to see if they had any issues with remote meetings.

## **6. Telecommuting Policy**

Paul has asked the committee members for guidance with this issue. Paul is leaning towards an informal policy/guidelines. He hasn't told staff that they could work one day a week from home yet.

There was discussion about possible ADA issues about being liable for injuries while working from home. Ergonomics – Had to have a workstation setup to work from home and be physically inspected by SMPDC. Beth Della Valle stated that she believes she has a copy of a policy that she would be willing to share. Working from home cannot: 1) Cannot create a burden on another staff person in the office. 2) Need to follow the basic other rules. 3) That the request may be denied if the supervisor does not feel you work well at home. 4) Need to treat all employees equally.

Jan Williams reported that in his past work history of over 1200 employees, that everybody had a home office and work was completed. Working from home works if employees are professional.

It was felt that this was really a HR issue. It was suggested that maybe we hire an HR person on a part-time basis. The County hired one and saved lots of money. "Without a resource, it makes your job harder."

There are two issues here:

- Remote work  
An issue Paul is having with allowing a staff person to work from home is that there are communication issues about this. It was stated, "New workforce will not change to old ways. We need to change to their ways." Chris Osterrieder agreed that the younger workforce has created communication challenges, but communication with people is very significant and should be part of their professional duties. A question during interview should be about how well they communicate.
- Snow day  
It was discussed that if the State, Local government offices call off work due to weather, than Paul should also close the office down. When a day is called off, the employee should be paid for that day.

It was suggested that Paul write-up guidelines and present to the next meeting.

## Other

Perry Ellsworth announced that he will be retiring within the next year.

Perry has suggested to Paul that they look at staff salaries and make adjustments as fit.

Annual Meeting: CrossCurrent is pushing hard to have the Governor attend our Annual Meeting. They want to make this Annual Meeting a big deal as it is our 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The date has not been finalized, but will be sometimes in June.

The Executive Committee meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month.

Jim Nimon made the motion to adjourn and Chris Osterrieder seconded the motion.

APPROVED