



**APPROVED MINUTES
NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
Executive Committee
April 15, 2020**

Members Present	Members Absent	Staff Present	Others Present
Karin Elmer, Chair Jim Battis, Vice Chair Susan Ruch, Treasurer Sarah Marchant Tamara Sorell Tim Tenhave Janet Langdell		Jay Minkarah, Executive Director Sara Siskavich, Assistant Director Gregg Lantos, MPO Coordinator	

1. Call to Order

Elmer called the Executive Committee meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

2. Public Hearing: Approval of the Locally Coordinated Transportation Plan for the Greater Nashua and Milford Region 2020-2024

With a motion from Battis, seconded by Tenhave, Elmer opened the public hearing at 6:04 by a unanimous vote.

Minkarah began the presentation by introducing the legal obligation relative to FTA section 5310 funding, the plan’s purpose and goals, the process including extensive stakeholder input in the form of stakeholder interviews and surveys, and major sections such as demographic profiles. He then reviewed how the findings of the plan and community needs translate into strategies and future projects. The full presentation is available at https://www.nashuarpc.org/download_file/3304/

Battis reflected that in the recent transit expansion report, ridership in Hudson was not predicted to be high enough to justify new fixed-route service, but this plan seems to suggest otherwise. In response, Lantos clarified that the former transit expansion plan examined the totality of a Rte 3A line; costs for a shorter route into Hudson are certainly worth a second look. Minkarah added that the terminus of Lowell Transit in Hudson and potential commuter connections to Lowell and Alewife by way of Hudson, as well as potential limited service to the Milford Hitchiner area, could influence the overall picture.

Tenhave observed that desired destinations reported in the surveys seemed to lack entertainment venues, e.g., movie theaters, bowling. recreational spaces, town centers. Minkarah responded that they, in fact, didn't come up, but it is unclear as to whether it was because of the way questions were framed, or if they simply weren't recognized by respondents as potential candidate destination because they aren't currently served.

Sorell observed that there potentially a market for premium bus service to Manchester airport.

Hearing no further comment, Battis motioned, seconded by Sorell, to close the public hearing at 6:39. The motion carried unanimously.

Battis made a motion, seconded by Tenhave, to approve the Locally Coordinated Transportation Plan for the Greater Nashua and Milford Region 2020-2024. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Business

a. Coronavirus Response Update

Minkarah reviewed the status of NRPC operations. The 30 Temple building is closed to the public. NRPC personnel is intermittently on-site to collect mail, conduct document sign-offs, etc. These activities are timed in a way to be compatible with social distancing. Staff is fully accessible at home via email and calls to their work extensions are routed to their home lines. The waiver of physical quorum requirements for public meetings in NH is important to our operations. NRPC has canceled two HHW events and several other projects are subject to postponements. Fieldwork is on hold, and there is some shifting in terms of UPWP utilization. Federal projects such as EPA brownfields and Healthy Communities are progressing.

b. Minutes: February 19th (Action Required)

Elmer accepted a motion by Battis, seconded by Ruch, to accept the Executive Committee minutes of February 19th, 2020. The motion passed with abstention from Tenhave.

c. Feb-March Dashboard (Action Required)

Minkarah briefly revisited the February-March balances and noted CDs continued to build. Staff activities were up. NRPC hosted Congresswoman Kuster's announcement of rail legislation, the transportation planners' collaborative is continuing again, and Minkarah testified at the Ten-Year Plan public hearing in support of the Merrimack 101A full-build project.

d. March-April Dashboard (Action Required)

Balances here remain consistent. Staff activities include meeting with Middlesex 3, a Transportation Management Association funding largely by private employers that facilitates reverse commute shuttle services from the Alewife MBTA Station in Cambridge to outer

suburbs. RPCs heard from the NHDOT Commissioner who deemed us essential, as is NHDOT and state government as a whole—they expect us to function on schedule as much as possible. Guidance has not been received from Federal partners on the validity of virtual meetings, so we will follow the lead of NHDOT.

The dashboard reflects staff training and webinars are way up, as are web stats that reflect increased posting activity from staff with messages that resonate with our audience.

There are no changes to the working budget.

Since financials are cumulative Minkarah progressed to the March reports. Receivables have been a bit slow, assets are up, payables are a bit high but we are not falling behind on bills. Overall our position is good.

We are just at about 75% of the fiscal year, grants are at 64% overall. We are unlikely to draw down HHW due to event cancellations, but EPA Healthy Communities can help offset that situation.

Notable expenses include the deposit for the Annual Forum and associated invitation costs. Overall, total income exceeds target.

Ruch made a motion to accept and place on file for audit the dashboard and financial reports for the periods of February-March and March-April 2020. After a second by Sorell, the motion passed unanimously.

e. NRPC Operating Policies Amendments (Action Required)

Minkarah introduced this item as a carryover from earlier discussions whereby edits were requested and are reflected in this red-lined version. Elmer asked if the current policy is relevant and appropriate given the sudden switch to remote work. Minkarah said yes overall and referred the question to Siskavich to answer in the context of the telecommuting policy. Siskavich pointed out that telecommuting required no additional technology and was implemented successfully, though staff that didn't have a suitable computer at home were loaned NRPC equipment. Elmer said this discretion can be exercised within the confines of the policy.

Ruch expressed the following additional suggestions:

P. 8, for added flexibility: *Expense report forms and checks payable to the Executive Director will be approved by the Treasurer or Chair, or if needed the Assistant Director.*

P.8. Designated "secure spot" should be edited to "locked file cabinet" as specified in other document sections describing handling of sensitive items, for example, personnel records.

Ruch made a motion, seconded by Battis, to approve the NRPC Operating Policy subject to amendments of today. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Old Business

a. Annual Forum

After some discussion, the Executive Committee reached a consensus to try to reschedule the April Forum even to a date in the Fall. Minkarah will research and provide some dates as late as October.

b. Audit RFP

Due to COVID-19 NRPC extended the deadline and modified the RFP to accepted electronic responses. Two firms responded, one of which is our current auditor. Ruch, Battis, and Tenhave agreed to form a subcommittee to review the responses.

c. TMA/MPO Governing Body Composition & NRPC 501(c)(3)

In light of the cancellation of the March Full Commission meeting, Elmer will call a special meeting of the Commission in May to present these two governance items, with the goal to have the Commission take action on both in June.

5. Transportation Programs

The Transit Expansion Study is underway and we are busy gathering data. We are also responding to action items that came out of the TMA compliance review. The MTP will be coming due, plus we are looking ahead to an update on the Prospectus. Staff is participating in a statewide working group looking at project ranking criteria for the 10-year plan process. NRPC is also watching closely for a potential infrastructure bill.

6. Other Business

a. Project Updates

No other project updates were discussed.

b. Strategic Governance

Mr. Mike Akilian of the Center for Strategic Governance has approached NRPC with an interest in developing RPC capacity to offer strategic governance as a line of service.

c. Executive Committee Membership

Minkarah pointed out that there are two Executive Committee vacancies. Tenhave suggested this be a specific meeting agenda item for Full Commission. Commissioner recruitment strategies were discussed.

6. Adjourn

With a motion from Battis, seconded by Tenhave, Elmer closed the meeting at 7:47 after a unanimous vote.

Next Meeting: May 20, 2020