



**FINAL/APPROVED MINUTES  
NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

**June 21, 2023**

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

**Members Present:**

Jason Hennessey, Amherst	Chris Costantino, Milford (via Zoom)
Danielle Pray, Amherst	Janet Langdell, Milford
Tamara Sorell, Brookline	John Yule, Milford
Joe Garruba, Hollis	Tim Berry, Mont Vernon
Dillon Dumont, Hudson	Dave Hennessey, Pelham
Tim Malley, Hudson	Peter Howd, Wilton
Michael Croteau, Litchfield	Kermit Williams, Wilton
Kim Queenan, Litchfield (Vice Chair)	Lucy St. John, NH DOT (via Zoom)
Karin Elmer, Merrimack	
Thomas Koenig, Merrimack	
Tim Tenhave, Merrimack (Chair)	

**NRPC Staff Present:**

Jay Minkarah, Executive Director  
Camille Pattison, Assistant Director  
Kristin Wardner, Administrative Assistant

**Others:**

Robin LeBlanc, RHL Strategies

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Tim Tenhave opened the meeting at 7:12p.m. with introductions.

**2. Privilege of the Floor**

No members of the public were present to speak.

**3. Approval of Minutes – March 15, 2023 & May 17, 2023**

Amendments to March 15, 2023, minutes:

- Next meeting date on last page should be June 21, 2023.

**Jason Hennessey motioned, with a second from Tim Berry,**

**THAT the minutes of March 15, 2023, be approved as amended and placed on file. A roll call vote was conducted. Chris Costantino, Lucy St. John, John Yule, Joe Garruba, Dillon Dumont, Tim Malley, Tom Koenig, Tim Berry and Peter Howd abstained.**

The motion **carried**.

Amendments to May 17, 2023, minutes:

- Next meeting date on last page should be June 21, 2023.
- Add Kermit Williams to the list of members present.

**Tim Berry motioned, with a second from Peter Howd,**

**THAT the minutes of May 17, 2023, be approved as amended and placed on file. A roll call vote was conducted. Chris Costantino, Lucy St. John, Michael Croteau, Dillon Dumont, Tim Malley, and Tom Koenig abstained.**

The motion **carried.**

#### **4. Statement of Strategy Update: Discussion with Robin LeBlanc**

Jay Minkarah introduced Robin LeBlanc from RHL Strategies who was brought in to assist with the update of NRPC's Statement of Strategy. LeBlanc explained that a Strategic Plan survey that went out to stakeholders and she then reviewed some highlights from the survey about awareness of what NRPC does. She highlighted some of the important themes that emerged from the results: housing, education for smaller towns, the need for rural specific planning, and how to maintain services and infrastructure with limited funds. She stated the responses were overwhelmingly positive and the survey included questions about now and going forward. She did 30-minute interviews with 8 people who indicated in the survey that they would be interested in participating in a follow-up discussion. [Click here to view the Survey Summary.](#)

The next step in the process is a virtual forum on July 13<sup>th</sup>. An invitation was sent to all those who took the survey and expressed interest. LeBlanc encouraged all Commissioners to attend. There was further discussion about survey outreach.

Kermit Williams asked what the result will be of this process. LeBlanc said it would be to create a high-level plan detailing where NRPC should focus the next 3-6 years. From the plan, she will develop and provide a dashboard to allow the Commission to measure progress and outcomes. Peter Howd asked Minkarah whether 3-6 year time frame is realistic. Minkarah stated they do need to be realistic about what can be accomplished in that time period. He said some things from the survey jumped out at him, for example grant writing assistance (a service that NRPC doesn't normally provide) while some other things may be easier to shift duties for NRPC staff and then some will require more of an investment (additional staff training, etc.). In regard to water quality (an area cited in the survey that NRPC should focus more on), Janet Langdell stated the Commission needs to think about what NRPC staff can do that is not already available out in the community and needs to be realistic about what can be offered. Minkarah agreed and added they need to be realistic about what role makes sense and adds value to members.

Joe Garruba stated typically at the town level they do master plans on a 10-year schedule and asked about the shorter frequency of this plan and how often it was done previously. Minkarah didn't believe there has been a consistent schedule and stated the last plan was done in 2016. LeBlanc said the general wisdom currently is that 10 years is too long for strategic planning. Tenhave confirmed the last plan was approved in 2016 with the vision of it being a 5-year plan.

Tamara Sorell said she believes there are things that can be done to improve water quality. Howd, a member of SoRLAC, explained the Souhegan River watershed affects all the municipalities, and the Commission has the ability to educate and possibly influence through education to look at water resources in a holistic sense (regionally) rather than town-by-town.

## 5. Regular Business

### a. Proposed Bylaw Amendments

Following are the proposed amendments to the NRPC Bylaws:

- Article IV. Officers, Section A delete: *“No officer shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office but may hold other offices at the will of the Commission.”*
- Article V. Meetings, Section B: Amend Order of Business
- Article VI. Committees, Section B: Change Board to Committee

Tenhaven explained that he is bringing forward the change removing term limits for officers himself, not on behalf of the Commission or Executive Committee. He is suggesting the change because it is difficult to identify officers willing to serve and it reflects the way most local boards operate – officers are elected annually, allowing roles to be changed when and if needed. He believes they are self-imposing a restriction that the Commission’s annual process will take care of no matter what.

Tenhaven stated changing the order of business is being done to reflect how it has been done for some time.

In response to Koenig’s question on term lengths for officers, Tenhaven said that it is 1 year.

**Tim Berry motioned, with a second by Kermit Williams,**

**THAT the proposed Nashua Regional Planning Commission Bylaw amendments be approved as presented.**

On the motion, Garruba said that he believes in turnover and doesn’t think removing the term limits is a good idea. Discussion ensued about there being little interest from commissioners to be on the Executive Committee. Jason Hennessey suggested breaking out the term limits and the remaining amendments. It was agreed upon.

**Tim Berry motioned, with a second by Karin Elmer,**

**THAT the proposed Nashua Regional Planning Commission Bylaw amendment to Article IV. Officers, Section A to remove the wording *“No officer shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office but may hold other offices at the will of the Commission.”* be approved as presented.**

On the motion, J. Hennessey suggested extending the term limit to 4 years. Dave Hennessey said removing the term limits will eliminate potential hurdles and said the Commission will vote out someone who is incompetent. Kim Queenan pointed out that the Bylaws could be changed again in the future if needed. Howd pointed out that Executive Committee term limits are 3 years, and a 4-year term limit would extend beyond that.

**A roll call vote was conducted with Jason Hennessey in opposition. Lucy St. John abstained.**

The motion **carried.**

**Kermit Williams motioned, with a second from Tom Koenig,**

**THAT the proposed Nashua Regional Planning Commission Bylaw amendments to Article V. Meetings, Section B and Article VI, Committees, Section B be approved as presented. A roll call vote was conducted. Lucy St. John abstained.**

The motion **carried.**

## **6. Annual Business Meeting**

### **a. FY 2024 Budget and Work Program**

Minkarah reviewed the details of the proposed FY 2024 Budget and Work Program. Highlights to Revenue include:

- Local dues - there was an increase approved last year – the first in a number of years.
- Federal contracts - largely flat
- Other grants - The Regional Housing Needs Assessment has been completed. The Robinson Pond Water Quality grant will be ending this fiscal year. The Souhegan River Management Corridor Plan is new in the coming year. Minkarah explained that NRPC staff runs support for the Household Hazardous Waste program for the Nashua Region Solid Waste Management District. He noted there is not an actual increase, it is a fluctuation in the number of events held per fiscal year, which varies between 5 and 7.
- Local planning contracts - Some of these are circuit riding and then various others. Minkarah said there are projects in almost every community. He noted the Wilton and Brookline HOP contracts and gave a brief explanation on HOP grants, explaining that they are Housing Opportunity Planning Grants made available through InvestNH.
- Other income - Interest income increased due to switching funds to the NH Public Deposit Investment Pool (NHPDIP).

J. Hennessey asked for bank account balances: Minkarah stated there are 2 checking accounts with approximately \$254,159 in TD Bank and \$3,662 in Bar Harbor, and the NHPDIP fund has \$272,717. Total cash on hand is \$671,287.

- State contracts - No change in the NH Office of Planning & Development contract. Minkarah explained the UPWP (Unified Work Program) is a 2-year contract with NH Department of Transportation which lays out how NRPC will spend, over a 2-year period, the federal transportation dollars funneled through NHDOT to NRPC. It is the largest amount of funding NRPC receives. All categories are increasing except 200 Policy & Planning. There is a significant increase in 500 Technical Assistance & Support, which is the transportation work directly for communities at their request. Overall, the increase is just under \$200,000, which is the first increase in at least 12 years.

There is a significant decrease in Mobility Management. Langdell explained the funding was the initiation of a new statewide program; they were able to advocate as a group to the State Coordinating Council to get funding that was equal across all 8 NH regions. That funding is going away so the FY24 amount is down to the original NH DOT proposal of \$50,000 per region. She stated that is through the Regional Coordination Council, of which NRPC is the lead agency.

The total Resources for the proposed budget is \$2,115,596, an increase of \$187,718.

Minkarah then reviewed Expenses:

- Dues /subscriptions - the increase is mainly due to software licenses.
- Total employee benefits - The budget reflects a net increase of one staff person and that is reflected in the salary and benefits lines.
- He stated that the changes are based on known or anticipated costs.
- Professional services - The increase is due to the cost for HHW contractor and cost for the Brownfields program environmental consultant.
- Rent & CAM - decrease is due to Utilities getting double counted in last year's budget.
- Depreciation - auditors suggested no longer counting depreciation of equipment.

Langdell asked if the NH DOT negotiated upcharge has changed and Minkarah stated it did not change from the 123% but may next year.

**Karin Elmer motioned, with a second from Tim Berry,**

**THAT the Nashua Regional Planning Commission FY 2024 Budget and Work Program be approved as presented. A roll call vote was conducted. Lucy St. John abstained.**

The motion **carried.**

b. Annual Grant and Contract Authorization

Minkarah explains that this authorizes him to apply for any grants and sign contracts on behalf of the Commission.

**Peter Howd motioned, with a second from Tim Berry,**

**THAT the Executive Director be authorized to file applications with federal, state, and local governmental units and other agencies to implement the FY 2024 work program of the Commission, and to execute agreements to receive funds for such purposes. A roll call vote was conducted. Lucy St. John abstained.**

The motion **carried.**

c. Setting of FY 2025 Dues

Minkarah stated there was an increase approved last year and are not proposing one for this year. He explained the dues amount is calculated with a formula based on population and equalized valuation ratio and is recalculated each year.

**Tim Berry motioned, with a second from Janet Langdell,**

**THAT the Nashua Regional Planning Commission FY 2025 Dues Assessment be approved as presented with no increase.**

On the motion, Garruba asked about rationale for equalized valuation. Minkarah said the formula has been that way for as long as he knows and assumes it is because it relates to the strength of the tax base of the community – a proxy for a town’s ability to pay. Minkarah stated if there was interest, the formula can be updated in the future. It was noted that the handout passed out during the meeting reflects the correct total for Equalized Valuation (\$36,823,884,160), not the amount on the table in the agenda packet.

**A roll call vote was conducted with Joe Garruba in opposition. Lucy St. John abstained.**

The motion **carried.**

d. Election of FY 2024 Executive Committee Officers

Tenhaven stated that before officers are voted on, the Commission needs to address Executive Committee members terms that have lapsed and need to be updated. He explained the role of the Executive Committee. He said there are 7 open seats out of 9 and stated the Nominating Committee is bringing forward 5 names and looking for additional volunteers. Kermit Williams and Tim Berry volunteered. Tenhaven stated based on that the Nominating Committee recommends Tim Berry, Karin Elmer, Jason Hennessey, Janet Langdell, Kim Queenan, Tim Tenhaven, and Kermit Williams. Coming off the Executive Committee is James Battis, Venu Rao and Tamara Sorell, and staying on are Dave Hennessey and Camille Correa. There is another opening anticipated in November.

**Tim Tenhaven motioned, with a second from Karin Elmer,**

**THAT the Commission accept the nominations of Tim Berry, Karin Elmer, Jason Hennessey, Janet Langdell, Kim Queenan, Tim Tenhaven, and Kermit Williams to the NRPC Executive Committee. A roll call vote was conducted. Lucy St. John abstained.**

The motion **carried.**

Langdell suggested providing the list of Commission members and terms in January moving forward.

Tenhaven stated that the Nominating Committee is recommending the following officers:

Tim Tenhaven - Chair

Kim Queenan - Vice Chair

Janet Langdell - Treasurer

**Tim Tenhaven motioned, with a second from Kermit Williams,**

**THAT the Commission approve the Executive Committee officers as recommended. A roll call vote was conducted. Lucy St. John abstained.**

The motion **carried.**

e. Slate of Directors for the NRPC Foundation

Minkarah briefly explained that the NRPC Foundation was established as the non-profit arm of NRPC to allow access to grants only made available to 501(c)(3)’s and to accept private contributions. There

is a 7-member governance board made up of Executive Committee officers, 2 Commissioners, and 2 citizens-at-large. He explained that Dave Hennessey's term is expiring this year and Karin Elmer has volunteered to replace him.

**Peter Howd motioned, with a second from Tim Berry,**

**THAT the Nashua Regional Planning Commission appoint Karin Elmer to the NRPC Foundation Board of Directors. A roll call vote was conducted. Karin Elmer and Lucy St. John abstained.**

The motion **carried.**

## **7. MPO Policy Committee**

### **a. Long Range Transportation Plan (MTP) Update**

Minkarah stated NRPC is in process of updating the Long Range Transportation Plan (MTP). It is a minimum 20-year plan and is federally required. He explained that all projects in the state Ten Year Plan are already in the MTP, but the goal is to add/develop additional projects so when funding is made available there is a pool of projects already. Minkarah stated that NRPC is currently in the process of meeting with town staff about project ideas. Also, a Transportation survey is live – trying to get as much input as possible.

### **b. CMAQ Projects Update**

Minkarah explained that all CMAQ projects, minus the EV applications, are moving forward into the Ten Year Plan, per NH DOT.

## **8. Other Business**

None

## **9. Commissioners Roundtable**

NH DOT - St. John stated that UPWP contracts are signed and the Ten Year Plan process is starting.

Milford - Langdell stated that Hitchiner Manufacturing has purchased 2 more properties and will have 25-100 new jobs. An application for 216-unit apartment complex has been accepted.

Hollis - Garruba stated that a 35-unit development just came to the Planning Board.

Litchfield - Croteau stated there is a new project with 172 townhomes that is going to be extending into Hudson. He said the town is forming an economic development committee. Queenan stated the town is reassessing impact fees. Litchfield is starting an energy commission and a social media policy.

Amherst - Pray stated there is a new proposed 55-unit development. Continuing to look into Amherst Village - there are a lot of safety concerns, and they are looking at ways to slow traffic, etc. They are forming a new committee to address it and are also forming an energy committee.

Brookline - Sorell stated that a 55+ development has been cleared. Pedestrian bridge over Mason Road is under construction.

Wilton - Williams stated the town received a HOP grant and thanked Camille and Caleb for their work. He expressed that the town feels they need a community plan, not just a master plan – a coordinated look at the future.

Hudson - Dumont said that Hudson has a lot of similar issues as other towns.

Merrimack - Koenig said the Planning Board just approved 175 additional units at Park Place (near outlet mall). They are in the middle of their Phase III, IV, V sewer upgrade. He said there are quite a few apartments under construction (about 1,000 units) – some workforce, mostly marketplace – 1000 units. He also said that the turnpike expansion is getting closer to Merrimack and will start to affect traffic in town.

Pelham - D. Hennessey said that Pelham is reviving their Economic Development commission as well as an energy committee. He discussed how the state housing board has overturned some of the town's Planning Board decisions.

Mont Vernon - Berry said there 3 houses before the planning board.

## **10. Adjourn**

**Motion to adjourn was made by Tim Berry, with a second from D. Hennessey, all in favor. The meeting ended at 8:58 p.m.**

**The next Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 20, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Kristin Wardner, Administrative Assistant