



The Rhode Island Rivers Council

c/o RI Water Resources Board
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908

Minutes of the Council Meeting held November 14, 2007

Conference Room C
William E. Powers State Administration Building,
One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI

ATTENDANCE:

A. Members Present

Joe Baer
Ted Callender
Guy Lefebvre
Scott Millar
Kevin Nelson
Sharon Pavignano
Will Rivero
Jane Sherman
Claudia Staniszewski

B. Watershed Organizations in Attendance

Anne Morrill, *Kickemuit River Council*

Call to Order:

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:12 AM.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Approval of the Minutes of Past Meetings

The Chair requested a motion for approval of the minutes for the September 12, 2007 meeting. Mr. Cassidy will be listed under Members Present, as the RI DEM representative. Ms. Sherman moved and Mr. Baer seconded approval of the minutes as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Discussion and Vote on the 2008 Work Plan

The draft work plan was prepared by Mr. Lefebvre and Ms. Sherman to be consistent with the current River Council statute, with designated tasks linked to legislative charges. Ms. Pavignano noted the number of hours she committed to the running of the Council and the Stewardship program (approximately 40 hours/week) and questioned how the Council will be able to achieve the work plan's goals absent full-time paid staff. While a part-time employee can help, they need strong supervision, and their priority may not necessarily be the work being performed for the Rivers Council.

The watershed stewardship program is especially time consuming. One suggestion was to put all information online, eliminating the time and funding needed for reproducing materials. Ms. Pavignano stated that this was discussed with the class attendees, and most preferred hard copies since they did not have high-speed access to the internet. Mr. Lefebvre suggested that funding from the legislative grant and volunteer work from the members of the Council should be sufficient to continue this program. Mr. Baer noted that in the proposed budget (to be discussed) he suggests that a watershed council could request a grant to run the watershed stewardship program.

Ms. Sherman noted the potential for alternate programming, suggesting that the Program Committee evaluate the demand for an annual watershed stewardship program, and consider alternating with programs that address other capacity issues, for example, understanding the new State Land Use Plan in the context of the development of local comprehensive plans. Another suggestion was a presentation on the draft policies now under revision by the Rivers Council.

Mr. Nelson moved to approve the workplan as submitted, seconded by Mr. Baer. Mr. Lefebvre noted that the plan, for the first time, includes all of the legislative statute and is a good basis for moving forward. The motion was unanimously approved.

3. Discussion and Vote on FY 2008 Budget – Legislative Funds

Mr. Baer (Council Treasurer) presented the financials and draft budget for discussion. He noted that our fiscal agent agreement with the RINHS ends 12/31/07, and we will have completed drawing down the 2006 legislative funds and the RIF grants. It is his goal to eliminate fund carryovers to future fiscal years and to disburse funds on a timely basis. Funds for the 2007 legislative grant will be disbursed soon, and we will be on track to utilize the 2008 legislative funds in this fiscal year.

The draft FY08 budget proposed:

Staff	\$2,925.00	12 Weeks X 15 Hours X \$16.25
Public Notices	\$1,000.00	To be re-allocated to grants, if unused by 3/1/08
Supplies	\$1,000.00	paper, printing, software, misc
Grant Writer	\$5,000.00	To be re-allocated to grants, if unused by 3/1/08
Grants	\$34,757.25	WSP Class to be offered as grant option
WRWC Fiscal Agent Fee	\$204.75	7% of \$2,925.00
Total	\$44,887.00	

Mr. Lefebvre suggested that the amount allocated for grant writing be reduced by \$3,500 for support of the watershed stewardship program. Ms. Pavignano noted that a professional grant writer would cost approximately \$100 hour. Mr. Lefebvre has been able to secure fund raising assistance for less. After discussion, it was agreed that \$2000 be allocated for a grant writer and that the grant writer monies would be distributed to the watershed councils if not utilized by March of 2008. Ms. Pavignano noted that we need a

fiscal agent to receive any grant funds and that based on existing policies and procedures, utilization of the WRB as a fiscal agent is not possible at this time. It was agreed that the RC and WRB should explore what needs to be done to accomplish this.

The discussion then centered on the stewardship program. The amount of funds allocated (\$3,000) would have to be expended during this fiscal year. Mr. Callender questioned if we would be able to spend this on the watershed program given that the program would not occur until next fall, and that the materials will be different for each class. While some expenses occur closer to the time of the program, Ms. Pavignano stated that the water quality testing kits, binders, and other costs could be expended before the end of the FY.

Ms. Sherman moved approval of the proposed budget as amended (\$5,000 for grant writer to be changed to \$2,000 for grant writer and \$3000 for watershed stewardship program). The motion was seconded by Scott Millar and unanimously approved.

4. Discussion and Vote on RFP for RIRC Grants to Watershed Councils

Ms. Pavignano reported that nine watershed councils are eligible to receive grants. Ms. Pavignano noted that apparently not all councils have used the funds according to their own grant proposals. This is a requirement that should be added to the grant contract to ensure that the funds are spent appropriately. Ms. Sherman moved that available grant funds (\$34,757) be divided by nine, and that each eligible watershed council would be invited to apply for funding up to approximately \$3,862. The grants would not be automatic; the Council would still need to determine that proposed programs are consistent with the intent to build watershed council capacity and consistency with the goals of the RIRC. If all monies are not awarded, the RIRC will determine how to distribute the remaining funds to the watershed councils.

Discussion on the motion proceeded with review the draft grant application instructions. Question # 4 was changed to read, "How will your project contribute to the preservation and protection of your river and the significant recreational, natural and cultural assets in your watershed?" Question #6 will be changed to, "Is your project replicable in other watersheds i.e. if successful, can your methods be shared with other watershed organizations to further their goals of watershed protection?" Question #5 will include a link to the RI Rivers Policy and Classification Plan. Question #10 was eliminated.

The proposed timeline for awarding grants was discussed. The RIRC determined that it would be best to award grants and sign contracts prior to the end of the calendar year. This would require councils to submit proposals in time for review at the December RIRC meeting. The grant guidelines were reviewed in light of this compressed timeline and amended to facilitate completion by the watershed councils. Mr. Nelson proposed that we change the project narrative in the following way. The RIRC will provide a statement of purpose that will include the RIRC Rivers Policies and Classification Plan (question # 5 and the content of question #6) as a guide for project development. The Councils will be requested to address the remaining questions within the context of the project narrative. A work plan template will be included with the application but it would not need to be submitted to the RIRC until after the grant contract is signed.

In addition, the RIRC contract will mandate that watershed councils receiving grants send at least two representatives to a workshop on issues relating to river protection. Ms.

Sherman moved approval of the amended RFP for grants to the watershed councils, seconded by Mr. Baer. The motion was unanimously approved.

5. Discussion and Vote on WRWC as Fiscal Agent for Staff Funds in 2008

Mr. Baer and Ms. Sherman, members of the Board of the WRWC, left the room for the discussion and vote.

The WRB cannot manage funds allocated for staff positions, but can manage legislative funds for other line items. The WRWC acted as fiscal agent for the RIRC 2007 legislative funds, and the arrangement worked well. Kevin Nelson moved and Scott Millar seconded a motion to approve the use of the WRWC as fiscal agent for up to \$3000 for staff salaries for the period covering January to June, 2008. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Discussion and Vote on Redesignation of the Blackstone River Watershed Council and the Narrow River Preservation Association.

The financial information needed from the applicants to complete the Rivers Council assessment has been provided but had not been fully reviewed. The item was tabled for consideration at the December meeting.

REPORTS:

7. Funding Committee

Mr. Baer reiterated the importance of timely disbursement of funds, and the completion of our contract with RINHS. Mr. Baer and Kira Stillwell of the RINHS reconciled all of the accounts. All legislative funds and RIF funds managed by the RINHS will be exhausted by the end of the calendar year.

8. Program Committee

Mr. Lefebvre reported that the Watershed Stewardship classes were a great success, and thanked Ms. Pavignano and Mr. Callender for all of their work. He thanked Ms. Pavignano for arranging for Anna Prager to speak to the group, and noted that she should definitely be invited again to speak about relations with local governments. John Torgan and Scott Millar also gave excellent presentations. Heidi Green of the Quonset Development Corporation was critically important to the success of the program. Quonset was a great location for the event, and Ms. Green provided not only the space, but also projectors and other equipment for the program.

9. Other business

Mr. Lefebvre discussed the content of the draft letter to RI DEM regarding the Cullion Concrete Dry Batching Facility in Cranston. The letter, addressed to Eric Beck, requests that the RIRC be notified of all RIPDES permit activity in regard to this project. The letter will be sent by Ms. Pavignano.

Adjournment:

On a motion by Mr. Nelson, seconded by Mr. Millar, the meeting adjourned at 11:08 am.

Next meeting December 12, 2007