



The Rhode Island Rivers Council

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

Minutes of the Council Meeting held January 9, 2008

Conference Room B
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
Jane Sherman
Claudia Staniszewski

B. Members Absent

Will Rivero
Mike Walker

C. Watershed Organizations in Attendance

Ann Morrill - Kickemuit River Council
Rita Holahan - PRA

D. Guests in Attendance

Ames Colt – Bays, Rivers and Watersheds Coordination Team

E. Staff

Sharon Pavignano

Call to Order:

The Co-Chair called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM.

1. Discussion and vote on minutes for the December 12, 2007 meeting

The minutes were distributed prior to the meeting. Mr. Millar moved to approve the minutes as submitted, seconded by Mr. Callendar. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Presentation by Ames Colt, Executive Director of the Bays, Rivers, and Watersheds Coordination Team

Mr. Colt distributed a summary sheet that describes the mission, purpose, and goals of the BRWCT and highlights its accomplishments since its creation in 2004. The core group of agencies guiding this work includes the DEM, CRMC, EDC, NBC, and Statewide Planning, with support and contributions from the WRB and the RIRC. Mr. Colt would like the RIRC with its designated watershed councils to help close a key gap in coordination i.e. helping to link the state with key constituents at the local level. The BRWCT has a number of committees and subcommittees working on multiple tasks that will contribute to the overall effort to address effectively natural resource protection and economic development.

The current focus of the Coordination Team is the creation of a Systems Level Plan that will set strategic goals and guide interagency efforts in the years 2008-2013. Following completion and the adoption of the plan later this year, annual workplans will be developed. The BRWCT is hoping to align the budgets and programs of state agencies as they relate to the protection, management, restoration, and sustainable development of fresh and marine waters and watersheds with the annual work plans.

Mr. Millar noted that Mr. Colt has been a very effective leader of this team, noting that both he and Mr. Nelson have participated in the process of developing the Systems Level Plan.

3. Discussion and vote on RIRC grants to watershed councils

At the last RIRC meeting, the BRWC was invited to submit a supplemental request for available funds. In addition, the PRA was asked to provide additional information to address the concerns of the RIRC relating to their application. Ms. Staniszewski reported on their responses.

Blackstone River Watershed Council: The BRWC requested additional funds for:

1. Paying their website consultant to train staff on how to update data on their website: \$300
2. Additional supplies for the project, including additional batteries for the GPS unit, tick repellent, water, safety ropes, and a first aid kit: \$372, and
3. Travel expenses (i.e. mileage reimbursement) of the volunteers: \$728

Ms. Staniszewski noted that the RIRC has denied travel expense funding to other grantees. Ms. Sherman moved, seconded by Mr. Callendar, to deny funding for travel expenses. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Baer moved, seconded by Mr. Callendar, to approve \$300 in funding for website training. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Nelson questioned the funding of some of the supplies. While rechargeable batteries for the GPS systems was a program related expense, he expressed concern about other items that were not directly linked to the program. Mr. Millar moved, seconded by Mr. Baer, that the RIRC allocate \$372 to the BRWC for supplies, with an explanation that the

funds were to be used for supplies that were directly related to the program (e.g. batteries.) The motion passed unanimously.

The total additional grant award to the BRWC is \$672.

Pawtuxet River Authority / Watershed Council: The PRA / WC had requested funding for professional services to redesign and upgrade their website. Ms. Staniszewski reported on her conversation with Mr. Nero regarding the website. The consultant contract is for one year and the work is proceeding. The contract includes updating and maintaining the site. Mr. Nero will be the primary person in charge of maintenance of the site. Ms. Holahan, representing the PRA, discussed the website, their initiatives to finance long-term support for the site, and the development of a committee that would have the expertise to work on the site in addition to Mr. Nero. Ms. Holahan has website management experience, and is committed to ensuring that the site remains an effective tool for PRA initiatives. Ms. Holahan also distributed a summary of an alternative grant proposal to conduct a lake management study of Tiogue Lake in Coventry, in collaboration with the Tiogue Lake Association. Mr. Nelson stated that he believed that this study is more consistent with the goals and mission of the RIRC, noting that capacity building had been a focus of previous grant cycles. Ms. Staniszewski felt that continuing to support capacity building was important, and that the website was an important tool for building support for PRA initiatives. Mr. Millar noted that a number of studies had been done on Tiogue Lake and that others may be undertaken by RIDEM; he questioned what a \$5,000 study could accomplish given the size of the lake. When asked, Ms. Holahan stated that the website proposal was the top priority for the PRA. Mr. Callendar supported the website proposal as proposed by PRA, noting that there is a significant commitment to the site, the priority that PRA has given to the proposal and its importance as a marketing and fund raising tool. Mr. Lefebvre endorsed the position of Mr. Nelson, feeling that the lake study would be a better use of the funds.

Ms. Staniszewski moved that the RIRC approve the PRA request for funding for its website. Mr. Millar seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 3 to 2. In favor were Ms. Staniszewski, Mr. Millar, and Mr. Callender. Opposed were Mr. Nelson and Lefebvre. Ms. Staniszewski moved that the award amount be increased from \$3400 to \$3,500. The motion was seconded by Mr. Callender and unanimously approved.

Ms. Staniszewski will prepare the grant letters and contracts and ask the watershed organizations to deliver them, in person or by mail, to the WRB by Friday. Ms Sherman will sign the contracts and request that the checks be drawn.

4. Reports

Funding Committee: Mr. Baer presented the financial report for December 2007 (attached). There was a question regarding the future employment of Ms. Sholly. Ms. Pavignano reported that if needed, she is available for approximately 5 hours/week from February to June. The financial report was accepted by the council.

Co Chair Ms. Sherman: All current grant applications have been signed and delivered to WRB. As of today, the checks have not been written. Ms. Crawley will continue to follow up to ensure that the checks go out. The redesignation applications of the BRWC and NRPA will be reviewed and voted upon at the next RIRC meeting. Mr. Nelson and Mr. Callender will report their recommendations at that time.

Co Chair Mr. Lefebvre: Mr. Lefebvre reported that the Blueways Alliance has incorporated, and that he has been in touch with John Monroe of the NPS to discuss the agreement to transfer the ownership of the ExploreRI website. It is anticipated that an MOU will be drafted within the next month and presented to the RIRC for approval.

The RIRC website work is progressing, with a floating banner of a river picture at the top of the site. The site includes listings of all the watershed councils, with links to their websites. While some rewording is in order, Mr. Lefebvre noted the significant improvements that have been made to the site. Ms. Pavignano has written to each of the watershed councils. She sent a synopsis of their organization for review and comment, prior to posting the information on the website. She also requested three pictures from each of them for the site. Ms. Pavignano is following up with Ms. Sholly and WRB to make sure that the software needed for updating the site is on the RIRC's laptop. All of the other RIRC files have been transferred to the laptop.

Ms. Pavignano is completing the final report required by the Rhode Island Foundation. The program officer has requested a copy of the WSP manual, which Ms. Pavignano has prepared to give to the RIF. Ms. Pavignano suggested that she thought it would be best to meet with the new program officer to give her the manual and provide information about the RIRC, even though there are no grants pending at this time. Ms. Staniszewski suggested preparing a short PowerPoint presentation with pictures, which Ms. Pavignano stated could easily be done.

The Co Chair thanked Ms. Pavignano for her dedication and hard work on behalf of the RIRC.

Program Committee: Mr. Lefebvre reported that he continues to receive positive comments about the watershed stewardship program, noting that Mr. Millar's presentation was mentioned as a model for running the class, notably because he included hands on learning activities which participants found very helpful.

Policy Committee: Mr. Nelson reported that a new policy section is still being finalized, with the goal of having the State Planning Council approve it by the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Nelson requested Mr. Millar to review and comment on the document. Mr. Millar stated that the work done for the BRWCT Systems Level Plan is consistent with the kind of information that should be included in the policy section, and he will work with Mr. Nelson to incorporate the information into the draft policy. Mr. Nelson suggested that the RIRC notify State Planning Council that a draft would be forthcoming, and to request time on their calendar for presentation of the draft.

Legislative Committee: Mr. Rivero was not able to attend the meeting but prepared for distribution a table of information that contains Legislative Dates and Deadlines.

6. Other Business: Ms. Morrill reported on progress with the Kickemuit study of identifying sources of fecal coliform, which has been extended to another site.

Mr. Millar moved, seconded by Mr. Nelson to adjourn the meeting. The motion was unanimously approved and the meeting adjourned at 10:45 am.

Next Meeting: February 13 at 4:00 pm in Conference Room B