

1 **NRPC Board of Commissioners Meeting**
2 **February 23rd, 2022**
3 **Virtual Meeting**
4

5 The meeting of the Board of Commissioners was held using the Zoom platform.
6

7 **Attendance**

8 Commissioners: See attached. A quorum was present to conduct business.

9 Staff : C. Dimitruk, B. Remmers, D. Pierce, E. Klofft and D. Devlin

10 Guests: Jude Rachele, Abundant Sun
11

12 Chair B. Irwin called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.
13

14 **Adjustments to the Agenda**

15 There are no adjustments to the agenda.
16

17 **Welcome, introductions, opening remarks**

18 B. Irwin welcomed everyone and introductions were made.
19

20 **Opportunity for Public Comment**

21 None.
22

23 **Minutes of the January Meeting**

24 *Y. Dandurand moved to approve the minutes as written, A. Voegele seconded.*
25

26 C. Dimitruk stated that E. Nance had emailed her minor grammar/spelling corrections.
27

28 *Y. Dandurand & A. Voegele accepted these grammar/spelling changes as part of the minutes.*

29 *Motion carried.*
30

31 **Presentation/Discussion: Jude Rachele, Abundant Sun, *Managing in a Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and***
32 ***Ambiguous World***
33

34 B. Irwin introduced J. Rachele. Abundant Sun will be supporting NRPC's work around justice, equity,
35 diversity, and inclusion. C. Dimitruk added that J. Rachele would be focusing on ethical leadership and
36 will be working with the Board for a year.
37

38 J. Rachele introduced herself. She stated the her focus will be on data-driven improvements derived
39 from good ethics, leadership, and governance. Her goal is to support the culture and health of
40 organizations and communities.
41

42 J. Rachele reviewed the group contract for encouraging civil discourse. She conducted a word
43 association exercise around the word diversity. J. Rachele stated that diversity is more than about
44 human difference, it is crucial to understand the connection to social, environmental and economic
45 justice.
46

1 J. Rachele introduced the VUCA framework, which stands for volatility, uncertainty, complexity and
2 ambiguity. When there is variation in systems, systems can be disrupted which makes it more
3 challenging to make good decisions. She asked how these factors had impacted the Commission’s ability
4 to make decisions. B. Irwin stated that compared to his job in public health, NRPC has been more stable.
5 K. Waite stated that the pandemic has brought challenges due to lack of human element and the broad
6 range in level of worry over the pandemic. A. Voegele stated that he was always concerned about
7 impacting others, especially unvaccinated children, with pandemic decisions. S. Jensen stated that the
8 ability to have effective large board meetings had gone down with the use of virtual meetings, but that
9 the same technologies had improved efficiency of one-to-one communication.

10
11 J. Rachele explained the environmental and social governance framework (ESG), which focuses on
12 identifying and addressing environmental and social impacts. Specifically, there is a focus on
13 environmental justice which is identifying and addressing disproportionately high & adverse impacts of
14 an agency’s program to minority and low income population. J. Rachele stated that achieving justice
15 benefits all residents. J. Rachele introduced two reflection questions for the Commission’s next meeting
16 with her: “what does ethical performance mean for NRPC?” and “what vision do you have for the
17 future.”

18
19 B. Morris asked why the ESG framework did not also focus on economic justice. J. Rachele stated that
20 she was not sure, but believed it might be in part to take the focus away from the economic bottom line,
21 which had long been the only focus for most for-profit companies. B. Irwin requested that J. Rachele
22 share the presentation with the Commissioners. J. Rachele stated she would provide it to the
23 Commissioners via email.

24
25 B. Irwin thanked C. Dimitruk for helping to find a consultant who could support NRPC’s learning. He
26 stated that the Executive Committee had felt it was best to engage in a learning process before taking
27 specific actions, so that they could ensure that their actions were well-informed and would benefit the
28 region. The Commissioners discussed how to distribute this information to the region’s municipalities.

29
30 **Commission Reports:**

31
32 **Finance/Operations**– C. Dimitruk stated that H. Garrett was unable to attend but that she could answer
33 any questions. The Commissioners did not have any questions.

34
35 **Personnel** – L. Ruple stated that the Committee had hired Barry Lampke as the new Working
36 Communities Challenge Program Manager after an extensive search. She stated that he is an
37 experienced candidate and is ready to hit the ground running on this challenging issue. His past job was
38 working at the ECHO Center on Lake Champlain water quality issues. B. Irwin thanked everyone that
39 was involved in the hiring process.

40
41 **Executive Committee** – B. Irwin stated that the Committee had reviewed applications to be a citizen
42 member of the energy and climate council. There will be an action item related to this later in the
43 agenda.

44
45 **Project Review** – B. Buermann stated that the Committee had conducted pre-review of three projects, a
46 biodigester in Enosburgh, a solar project in Sheldon, and a stormwater project in the City of St. Albans.
47 No decisions had been made on any project. He stated that the Committee had been applying an

1 environmental justice lense to reviewing projects. B. Irwin stated that it was good to see projects
2 improving based on Committee feedback, such as had happened with the Enosburgh project.
3
4 **Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)** – B. Remmers stated that TAC had met with local legislators
5 to discuss regional transit issues. Three legislators attended.
6
7 **Energy Committee-** B. Buermann stated there would be an action item related to this later on in the
8 agenda.
9
10 **Brownfields Committee** – C. Dimitruk stated that there was a open spot for a Commissioner on the
11 Brownfields Committee. She noted that the Committee typically meets during the day.
12
13 **Regional Plan and Policy Committee-** E. Nance stated that the Committee is meeting Monday to discuss
14 the timeline and outreach plan for the Regional Plan & Energy Plan update. She stated that it would be
15 important to incorporate the work completed with Abundant Sun into the Regional Plan update.
16
17 **Vermont Economic Progress Council (VEPC)** – A. Voegele stated that he was planning to attend the
18 upcoming meeting to support BETA Technologies VEGI application. BETA Technologies is considering
19 using the old Energizer plant to develop batteries for their electric aircraft, however they are also
20 considering sites in Plattsburgh. A. Voegle stated that the VEGI application would be key to making St.
21 Albans a viable site. C. Dimitruk stated that NRPC had sent a letter of support to the VEPC for the
22 project.
23
24 **Green Mountain Transit-** B. Buermann stated that the GMT Board was continuing to conduct contract
25 negotiations for rural drivers. He stated that the Board had discussed safety concerns at the transit
26 center and on buses and were considering how to address these issues. C. Dimitruk stated that these
27 discussions included conversation about how to provide mental health and social supports for those
28 causing distruptions.
29
30 **Clean Water Advisory Committee-** C. Dimitruk stated it was likely this Committee will be dissolved.
31
32 **Healthy Roots Advisory Committee-** L. Douglas reported that the Committee did not meet, the annual
33 report will be sent out to the Commissioners soon.
34
35 **Northwest Vermont Regional Foundation-** K. Waite stated that they met and held elections. K. Waite
36 was elected chair, B. Irwin was elected vice chair, A. Alling as elected Secretary, and R. Brown was
37 elected Treasurer. He stated that the Foundation hasn't been utilized much because of the pandemic,
38 but is looking at how to make a bigger impact this coming year.
39
40 **Office-** C. Dimitruk stated that there was a lot of legislative activity and that she would send out an email
41 with more details. She stated that staff is transitioning to a new project management software. D. Pierce
42 stated that two watershed basin councils were being formed, and that these entities would be
43 responsible for determining how to allocate funds to water quality projects.
44
45 **Regional Energy and Climate Committee**
46 B. Irwin stated that the Executive Committee had reviewed applications for citizen members of the
47 Regional Energy and Climate Committee. 5 citizen members have been recommended, along with 2
48 alternates. 6 of the 7 Commissoner seats have also been filled. B. Irwin asked if any Commissioner in

1 attendance wanted to fill the last Commissioner seat. B. Morris stated that he was interested in the seat.
2 B. Irwin added B. Morris to the list of Commissioners on the Committee.

3
4 *E. Nance motioned to ratify the Committee membership list as amended, S. Hadd seconded. A. Voegele*
5 *asked if the Committee planned to meet in person and if so where they planned to meet given their*
6 *large size. B. Irwin stated that those details were still being determined. The motion carried.*

7
8 **FY22 Budget Adjustment**

9 C. Dimitruk provided an overview of adjustments to the budget. The bottom line has not significantly
10 changed, but spending patterns have. There is an increase in income based on the timing of some multi-
11 year grants, as well as receiving a new grant for wayfinding along the Missiquoi Valley Rail Trail. There
12 are some increased expenses including to payroll and building cost, along with the new program
13 management software. There is new spending to implement the wayfinding grant.

14
15 *B. Morris motioned to adopt the budget as amended, A. Voegele seconded. The motion carried.*

16
17 **Commissioners Announcements**

18 None.

19
20 **Adjourn**

21 *M. Scholten moved to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:27 PM.*