

**Mount Ascutney
Regional Commission**

Minutes of Monday, April 19, 2021
MARC Offices, Ascutney, VT
and via Zoom

Commissioners Present: Tom Bock, Chester; Joe Fromberger, Andover; Kathy Rondeau, Reading; Peter Daniels, Weathersfield; Tom Marsh, Windsor; Steve Waldo, Baltimore; Tom Kenyon, West Windsor; Etienne Ting, Cavendish; Terry Carter, Ludlow; Walter Martone, Springfield.

Staff Present: Tom Kennedy, Jason Rasmussen, Cynthia Porter.

Tom Bock opened the meeting at 12:00 PM.

1. Changes to the Agenda
 - a. Tom Kennedy asked to speak about virtual meetings after July 1st.
2. Secretary's Report
 - a. *Steve Waldo made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2021 MARC meeting as presented. Second by Tom Kenyon. Peter Daniels abstained. Motion passed unanimously.*
3. Treasurer's Report
 - a. *Steve Waldo made a motion to receive the March 2021 financial report. Second by Tom Kenyon. Motion passed unanimously.*
4. Discussion of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)
 - a. Tom Kennedy provided an update on the state, county and municipal funding that is anticipated as part of the ARPA. The money should start arriving in May or June. It may not be as flexible as some people are expecting. However, not much is clear until the federal guidance is issued. Projects completed with ARPA funds will need to be completed by 2024. It is possible that, with the addition of ARPA funds, towns will need a single audit.
5. Discussion of One-Time Brownfields Funding
 - a. Tom Kennedy gave an overview of the Governor's proposed \$25 million in one-time funding for brownfields projects. The Jones and Lamson site in Springfield is one of the five sites identified for funding. This funding will be tremendously helpful to finally demo this building, which we have been working on since 1998. Tom indicated that an RFP for the J&L demo will be released soon, and we work should begin by fall 2021.
6. Discussion of Broadband Outreach Efforts
 - a. Tom Kennedy and Rachel Scudder are working on a project to identify parts of the region that are under-served by broadband. MARC's role is to facilitate a conversation about addressing broadband improvements, whether they be with existing providers or through the creation or (more likely) expansion of a Communications Union District. To date, Tom and Rachel have meet with

Weathersfield and Cavendish. They hope to meet soon with Ludlow and Baltimore.

7. FY 2022 Budget Committee

- a. Tom Kennedy reported that staff are preparing a draft budget for FY 2022. Due to uncertainties with the influx of funding, such as ARPA, we should plan to revisit the budget mid-way through FY 2022. The Budget Committee will be asked to meet soon to develop a draft budget for review at the May board meeting, and approval in June. Joe Fromberger indicated that he does not have time to serve on the Budget Committee this year.

8. New VTrans Project Selection and Prioritization Process

- a. Jason Rasmussen indicated that the state has revamped their process to evaluate transportation projects. This is the first year of a pilot effort to redesign this process. The TAC is now reviewing new transportation projects for funding consideration. This year, the TAC is considering roadway, paving and traffic operations/safety projects. Next year they will consider bridge projects. The TAC will prepare recommendations for the board to consider at the May meeting.

9. New Business

- a. Tom Kennedy asked if we should consider meeting after July 1st in-person, virtually or as a hybrid. There was interest in maintaining the ability to attend via Zoom.

10. Adjourn

Peter Daniels made a motion to adjourn at 1:00 p.m. Second by Steve Waldo. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Rasmussen