

GPCOG Executive Committee
September 28, 2011
12:00 p.m. at GPCOG

Members Present: Mike Reynolds, President, Raymond; Gordy Billington, Standish; Tom Blake, South Portland; Dick Brobst, North Yarmouth; Tony Plante, Windham; John Pressey, Gorham; Matt Sturgis, Gray; Ed Suslovic, Portland; Lisa Villa, Harrison; Bill Whitten, Cumberland County; Dick Wood, RC&D

Staff: Neal Allen, Maddy Adams, Ann Thompson, Ben Lake, Eben Marsh, Jennifer Puser

Guest: Anastasia Bogdanova, Archangelsk, City Administration, Russia

- 1. Welcome and Introductions.** Mike Reynolds called the meeting to order at 12:07. Changes to the agenda: The PACTS Director is out sick today so we won't be doing the PACTS presentation but we have an alternate agenda item about the GPCOG Energy Program.

Introductions were made around the table with members providing an update on their sustainability initiatives.

- Tom Blake – sustainability is a high priority in South Portland.
- Tony Plante – still getting started in Windham. The Council adopted an Energy Plan and we're working on implementation.
- Gordy – form based code has been adopted in Standish. About to issue an RFP for about a mile of sidewalks in the downtown area.
- Ed Suslovic – Portland has a Russian intern working with them from our sister city of Archangel. Two more people will be arriving tonight and then a dozen students will be coming in. We hope to send a delegation from Portland to Russia. Portland is about to open the new airport terminal at the Jetport; it is a LEED-certified building. There's a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 9:30 a.m. on Friday, and on Saturday there will be a public open house.
- John Pressey – Gorham is working on a lot of areas regarding sustainability especially with roads. They are looking at rezoning in some areas. Exploring bus transit.
- Eben Marsh – in the last year the GPCOG Cooperative Services program has looked into including green items such as vehicle idle reduction; low resistance tires; biofuels, and we're investigating bicycle racks.
- Bill Whitten – have a meeting scheduled with Senator Collins to continue support for CDBG.
- Lisa Villa – New town manager in Harrison; all is well.
- Matt Sturgis – a couple of weeks ago they had an energy workshop in Gray; it is being rebroadcast. A special town meeting was held and a decision was made to extend the TIP ten years for Northbrook – their industrial park.
- Mike Reynolds – In Raymond, they're looking at an old school building with the idea of maybe making it a town community center and more. They are moving forward with their three-town fire/rescue merger. They're always looking to partner with other communities.

- 2. Meeting Minutes: Executive Committee Meeting of May 11, 2011.** *Matt moved approval of the May 11, 2011 minutes and Ed seconded the motion. All were in favor.*

3. Additional Agenda items.

Revenue anticipation note with Gorham Savings Bank. Annually we need the approval of the board for our Revenue Anticipation Note. The ceiling is \$250,000 and the interest rate is 2.5%. The highest we had out over the past year was \$70,000 and we do still have severe problems with cash flow due to lag time in receiving grant funds from state and federal sources. *Tom Blake moved approval with Matt Sturgis seconding the motion to authorize the approval of the \$250,000 revenue anticipation note as follows:*

VOTED: To authorize the issuance of the Notes and the terms set forth on Exhibit A and in subsequently the form presented to this meeting;

VOTED: To sell said Notes to the Purchaser set forth on Exhibit A at par and with such premium, if any, as is set forth on Exhibit A;

VOTED: To authorize the Executive Director and the Finance Director to sign the Notes, and to affix the seal of the issuer to the Notes;

VOTED: To authorize the Finance Director to deliver the Notes to the Purchaser against payment therefore;

VOTE: To authorize the Executive Director and the Finance Director to execute and deliver this Resolution, a Signature and No Litigation Certificate with Receipt, a No Arbitrage and Tax Certificate, and the IRS Form 8038-G in substantially the form presented to the directors and such other documents as may be necessary or appropriate to accomplish the sale and delivery of the notes in accordance with the foregoing.

All were in favor of the motion.

Revolving Loan Fund Committee. Daniel Walsh of Norway Savings Bank is being recommended to serve on the RLF Committee. There are ten members on the Committee; they act independently and responsibly. GPCOG plays a second or third role in any loans. Over the years the program has really made a difference with helping smaller businesses get started. It is capitalized through FAME and EDA. COG doesn't issue bonds or debt; we pass through. We're a service provider. *Tom Blake made a motion to approve Daniel Walsh as a member of the GPCOG RLF Committee. Matt seconded the motion and it passed.*

4. Program: GPCOG Energy Program. Jennifer Puser and Ben Lake. Ben developed the Energy Inventory that covered the GPCOG service area. Last year we received funding from Cumberland County to expand that effort to include the entire county and to take the effort to a higher level regarding citizen input and participation. Ben has been working with a number of communities on energy planning.

Jennifer spoke about EmPowerMe/EmPower Cumberland County, and the Energy Working Groups. EmPowerMe is a consortium of groups and individuals from the private, public and non-profit sectors with an interest in reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, specifically at the local government level. While the Working Group is based in Cumberland County and the Greater Portland Region, it produces materials and models available and applicable to all of Maine. The goal of EmPowerMe is to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions through strategic energy planning, public outreach and the provision of resources and technical support to municipalities and local energy committees.

Ben reported that to address energy and sustainability issues, GPCOG started with a couple of pilot communities back in 2009 -- Cape Elizabeth and Yarmouth. When the grants came through, we provided assistance to North Yarmouth, Windham and Gray. They completed an inventory and developed an energy plan. We have been able to provide some technical expertise but it's been a partnership with the towns also. The towns have set up their own energy efficiency committees.

Cumberland County Climate and Energy Plan – the greenhouse gas inventory was completed. The majority of costs and emissions comes from transportation.

Then a major public participation process was implemented. Over a five-month period, “Power hours” or focus groups were held. Just under 200 people participated in the power hours and 22 of 28 Cumberland County communities were involved. Private sector as well as the public sector were involved. People got together and voted on various strategies. The #1 idea was to improve energy efficiency.

The five top-rated single ideas were to:

1. Improve energy efficiency in existing buildings (14% of all votes)
2. Power homes and businesses with sustainable energy (9% of all votes)
3. Expand and improve regional bus and rail service (8% of all votes)
4. Make it easier and safer to travel without a car (7% of all votes)
5. Reduce the distance that food and goods travel (6% of all votes).

Actions and recommendations are being finalized and we hope to have a draft completed by mid-December. In January we will hold a large public meeting. We have reconvened a communications subcommittee to do outreach, etc. The final plan isn't due to the County until April 2012. We have involved the County Commissioners in the process. We are in the final stages. The hope is that the plan will be implemented.

Ed stated that there seems to be a proliferation of agencies that deal with energy efficiency. Is that something we should be focusing on so that duplication of effort isn't happening? He noted that South Portland is taking the lead regarding what options are out there regarding pooling our resources to buy energy, etc. How do we latch onto that information? Does it make sense to have several municipalities work together to do an ESCO? How can we make it easier for municipalities to work together and reinvent the wheel? John P. said that in Gorham they are compiling that information, along with case studies locally and nationally. On the partnership piece, the local governments are going to have to work together.

Ben reported that, in addition to the plan, GPCOG has a number of other sustainability initiatives such as using our regional presence to act as a clearinghouse of information for communities about what is going on in communities. We have a web site – EmPowerMe. We also want to develop a list serve of local energy committees and other resources that are out there.

Jennifer spoke about development of small to mid-sized wind power projects. We have received a grant from USDA to provide development assistance for wind power and wind generation to farmers and small businesses located in rural areas in Maine. A model wind ordinance will be developed for municipalities, as well as an outreach strategy. We have a year to complete the deliverables; we will be starting in a couple of weeks.

Matt asked if there are any partnership opportunities for solar. Jennifer reported that there was some recent money available for solar projects but we didn't meet the requirements. It is definitely something that we would be interested in. Mike noted that Raymond has looked into wind power. If they had regulations beforehand that would be great.

Some of the things GPCOG is involved with include sharing data, sharing best practices, serving as a resource provider, and sharing building standards and common ordinances that communities can adopt.

- 5. Steering Committee Retreat** – Two reports in the packet – a summary report of the retreat and a document that Neal had prepared prior to the retreat for discussion purposes, along with action items.

Summary Report. There was a lengthy discussion about the sustainability principles at the Retreat. The thought was that we should survey our membership to determine if and how the principles are being used. It's kind of been a subliminal process.

Strengthening the member representation to this committee. There is one representative from each municipality on the Executive Committee. The Steering Committee process has worked well. It was recommended that we invite a representative from the Educational Alliance to have an ex-officio seat on the board.

At the Retreat, there was much discussion about grants and the potential of GPCOG providing a service to our membership with researching and writing grants. The grant writer would be available to work with GPCOG communities and assist with submitting those grants to increase the amount of resources that flow into the region. We don't know yet how it would be structured or funded.

Tony Plante made a motion to approve the Action Plan, seconded by Ed Suslovic. Motion passed.

- 6. Activity and program Updates; President and Executive Director**
 - Economic development and SMEDD. We've finally become our own Economic Development District. We invited the Greater Portland Economic Development Council to come in and talk with us (the GPCOG Steering Committee) about their objectives and goals and how important it is to have everyone all plugged in together.
 - We had a one-year arrangement with DECD for business development assistance but that money has gone away. There was discussion about how that service could be staffed by GPCOG.
 - The idea of meeting with the Portland Press Herald editorial board was also discussed. Lisa suggested also going to regional papers as well.
 - Information sharing meeting with the new group of County Commissioners.
 - Sustainability forums. The next forum will be built around economic development and housing. The idea of an information program on form based code was also mentioned.
 - Office Space. We need to notify our current landlord soon regarding whether or not we are going to stay or move. Our lease expires in November, 2012.
 - The GoMaine program is under review by the state to determine options.
 - The energy program is building momentum.

- There are two vacancies on the RC&D Board. If you or someone you know might be interested in serving, please let Neal know. Dick provided a little information about RC&D.
- RC&D recently lost their federal funding and they are currently working to get it back. John Pressey said he would be interested in serving on the RC&D Board. The Committee requested information about RC&D, along with meeting times.
- We received another \$400,000 in Brownfields funding in June; Caroline Paras has been instrumental in that. We are exploring a Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund program.

Tom mentioned nuisance or disorderly house ordinances. It doesn't address the problem, it just moves it around. Regionally, this may be something we may want to look at.

7. Other Business. None

8. Adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m.