

**GPCOG Executive Committee Minutes
February 25, 2009 Meeting
12:00 p.m. at GPCOG**

In attendance: Paul McKenney, President, Cape Elizabeth; Gordon Billington, Standish; Dick Brobst, North Yarmouth; Peter Crichton, Cumberland County; Jim Gailey, South Portland; Suzanne McCormick, PROP; Shonn Moulton, Gorham; Mike Reynolds, Raymond; Bill Schaffer, Yarmouth; Matthew Sturgis, Gray; Lisa Villa, Harrison; Dick Wood, RC&D

Members absent: Bridgton, Casco, Chebeague Island, Cumberland, Falmouth, Freeport, Frye Island, Long Island, Naples, New Gloucester, Portland, Pownal, Scarborough, Sebago, West Bath, Westbrook, Windham

GPCOG Staff: Neal Allen, Maddy Adams, Anne Holland, Steve Linnell, Ann Mazerolle

Guests: A.J. Brown and Greg Chabot from Runyon Kersteen Ouellette; Elizabeth Trice, Cumberland County

1. **Welcome and Introductions.** Paul McKenney called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m. and welcomed everyone. Introductions were made.
2. **Minutes: Executive Committee meeting of January 14, 2009.** *Dick Brobst moved approval of the January 14th minutes, with Dick Wood seconding the motion. All were in favor.*
3. **Appointments: Cumberland District Public Health Council.** In response to State requirements, the City of Portland's Public Health Division in collaboration with Cumberland County played a lead role in developing the Cumberland District Public Health Council (CDPHC). The GPCOG Executive Committee has been briefed on the purpose and efforts of the CDPHC at a previous meeting. The CDPHC has recently adopted bylaws that provide for GPCOG to appoint three municipal government representatives to serve on the Council, at least one of which must be an elected official. *The following Executive Committee members volunteered to serve on the Council: Dick Brobst from North Yarmouth; Shonn Moulton from Gorham and Lisa Villa from Harrison. The Executive Committee was in favor of these appointments.*

Decrease in Member Dues. A handout of member dues was distributed to the Committee. The Steering Committee is recommending that a 10% dues decrease be put in place for the next fiscal year. GPCOG is cognizant of the serious financial difficulties that our members are facing. We are confident that we will still be able to provide our services for one year at the reduced dues level. A breakdown of where the cuts will occur will be provided to the Committee. **Dick Wood moved approval of a 10% member dues decrease for the next fiscal year. The motion was seconded and all were in favor.**

4. **Audit Report.** Greg Chabot and A.J. Brown of Runyon Kersteen Ouellette presented a summary of the audit report for the period July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008. The full audit report will be mailed out later this week. Greg explained that there were some changes in state standards this year which included more testing of internal controls. Another change was in the terminology – 'reportable condition' is now called 'significant deficiency.' In this area, segregation of duties was once again cited due the small size of the Finance Department. Ann explained that this is an annual finding and that she does use other staff such as the HR Director and the Receptionist to try to segregate duties.

A.J. Brown reviewed the financial statements page by page. GPCOG received a clean opinion. After the auditors responded to questions from the Committee, *Dick Wood made a motion to approve the audit report for July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008, seconded by Matt Sturgis. All were in favor.*

5. **Revenue Anticipation Note.** Last year GPCOG set up a line of credit because cash flow was strained because we were not receiving timely payments from MaineDOT and grants with quarterly payments. Interest on any portion drawn will be at 3.5% and must be repaid annually. This line of credit needs to be approved by the Executive Board annually. *A motion was made by Dick Brobst and seconded by Dick Wood to authorize the Executive Director and Finance Director of GPCOG to execute a Revenue Anticipation Note with Gorham Savings Bank in the amount of \$200,000.* Last year's note was \$100,000 and this year's is \$200,000 and it was asked why this was the case. Ann responded that the bank uses a formula to determine how much should be allocated in the note. She added that cash flow is better this year so we don't expect to have to use it very frequently. It just gives us authorization to draw. *All were in favor of the motion to approve the Revenue Anticipation Note.*

6. **Regional Planning Concept.** Neal explained that the idea of a regional plan incorporating the seven sustainability principles was discussed at the January Executive Committee meeting. The idea is to coordinate a regional comprehensive plan through COG rather than the State Planning Office (SPO). The initial response from the SPO has been very favorable. Neal met with Sue Inches of the SPO yesterday and she is meeting with her staff today to discuss this idea further. The SPO has been looking for a regional model that can be replicated throughout the state. The regional comp plan would be guided by the seven sustainability principles and it would focus on land use planning, transportation planning and economic growth. Neal reviewed the concept plan included in the agenda packet. It would probably be a two-year process to develop the plan. As such, the regional plan would be enacted through common municipal ordinances and it would need to be consistent with state growth management goals. The concept calls for municipalities to work through GPCOG as opposed to the SPO. Neal reviewed the outcomes as outlined on the memo. If it were replicated throughout the state, SPO would only need to review six regional plans versus 400+ individual comprehensive plans. It would build a greater sense of collaboration between the communities.

Tied to this is economic development and COG has taken a proactive look at this as well. The Metro Regional Coalition is looking into a regional economic development authority. We think it is important to think beyond just the Portland region in terms of economic development and have developed a draft concept plan that seeks to integrate a more regional strategy. Neal distributed a handout with a flow chart and together with Paul reviewed the concept.

Another piece of this is the proposed Center for Global Engagement. The City of Portland established the Global Communities Task Force under Ed Suslovic's leadership. The report was submitted to the City of Portland and it was accepted by the Portland City Council. An important recommendation from the report is the establishment of the Center for Global Engagement and that it be housed at GPCOG. Neal reviewed the reasons why it would make sense for COG to do this.

The timeline will depend on how well this idea is received and then over the next few months we would need to identify how we would implement it. Paul stated that it is very cost effective because we are tying together many of the pieces that are already in place. Neal added that we do have economic development and planning funds that are used for developing and updating the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Matt asked what type of timeline and acceptance is anticipated with the comp plan process, and added that enforcement done uniformly will be very difficult. He asked if there was a provision for enforcement capacity. Neal responded that we are looking at a two-year process to develop the plan and it would be developed in concert with all of our members. Jim Gailey said he is in support of the regional concept but asked how many towns are planning on redoing their comp plans in the next year. South Portland will be doing theirs in the next year. Is there something that can be done so that those towns that are

starting their plans won't have to redo them if this regional plan goes forward? Paul questioned whether or not we should ask for an extension for those towns that are expecting to do their plans in the next year so that they could be involved in the regional plan. Lisa thought it was a great idea but Harrison is also starting their comprehensive plan process. Neal explained that this is still a concept and there is still a lot to work through. He offered the opinion that it could take up to ten years to fully implement. Peter thought the regional economic development concept was a good idea. Neal explained that it is a proactive approach -- we are trying to integrate what we currently have in place to make it work better. Jim encouraged finding a balance between urban and rural.

7. Reports and Updates.

Maine Street Marketplace. Paul reported on the recent Maine Street Marketplace event held at USM. It is a regional farm alliance bringing people together to integrate ideas. There were over 160 people in attendance and another 50 people had to be turned away.

ICLEI. Steve reported that we are still awaiting the new software. However, we will have an intern working with us to start the process working with three GPCOG member municipalities -- South Portland, Cape Elizabeth and Yarmouth. Hopefully we will learn from that and replicate the process in other towns. We will collect the data for the region and we will ultimately put together a regional energy plan.

Cape Elizabeth Energy Plan. The plan is now available on the Cape Elizabeth web site.

Mike Reynolds thanked Peter Crichton and Mallory Shaughnessy for working with them while the town of Raymond investigated seceding from Cumberland County. In their budget, Raymond has dropped all memberships including MMA and considered dropping out of GPCOG. They have decided to keep their membership with GPCOG in the budget because they feel it is important to do things regionally and to have someone to go to ask for assistance as various issues come up.

8. Adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.