

GPCOG Steering Committee Minutes
February 24, 2010 Meeting
12:00 p.m. at GPCOG

In attendance: Gordy Billington, President, Standish; Cathy Breen, Falmouth; Mike Reynolds, Raymond; Matthew Sturgis, Gray

Guests: Greg Chabot, Runyon Kersteen Ouellette

Staff: Neal Allen, Maddy Adams, Eben Marsh, Ann Thompson

1. **Welcome and Introductions.** Gordy Billington opened the meeting at 12:10 and declared a quorum.
2. **Minutes of November 18, 2009.** Cathy Breen was in attendance at the November 18th meeting but her name was not listed as being present. *With that correction, Cathy moved approval of the minutes with Matt Sturgis seconding the motion. Motion passed.*
3. **Audit Report: FY 2008-09.** The Audit Report was scheduled to be presented to the Executive Committee in January. However, due to a scheduling mix-up, the report is being presented today to the Steering Committee at the suggestion of the Chair. The Audit Report has been mailed to all Executive Committee members and we haven't received any questions or comments to date.

Greg Chabot reported that GPCOG has received an unqualified "clean" opinion, meaning the financial statements are fairly stated in all material respects. There were no significant deficiencies of internal control devices. He provided a handout providing a financial overview. Greg reported that everything was reconciled and ready for the audit. Greg walked through the "financial overview" document. He reviewed the numbers from 2009 compared with 2008. Mike R. asked why there was a jump in designated funds in 2002. Neal responded that it was due to the creation of the Endowment Fund and further explained how that Fund came about. Ann noted that the line of credit is now at zero. *Matt Sturgis moved approval of the 2008-2009 with Cathy Breen seconding the motion. All were in favor.*

4. **Discussion: FY 2010-11 Budget.** Neal reminded the Committee that last year the member dues were reduced by 10% and the GPCOG staff did not receive any salary adjustments. He does feel an obligation to staff and will likely recommend an adjustment on the salary line. The 10% reduction in member dues amounts to \$24,000. Neal recommended that we go back to our regular dues rate, with no increase. He mentioned that Portland is having another difficult budget year. Gordy agreed with restoring the dues to the regular rate. He noted that local revenues appear to be coming back.

Ann Thompson has been collecting information from towns regarding salaries and benefits. The members discussed what was being done regarding salaries in each of their towns. In Raymond, for example, merit raises were given last year, but this year there will be no salary increases. They kept benefits the same but they are down a couple of people in this year's budget. They hope it will only be one year that they will have a zero percent increase in salaries. Their board has gone paperless. There will be no salary increase for nonunion employees in Cape, and there will be a 3% increase in Gray because they didn't get any raises last year. The discrepancy between what the School Department gets versus municipal employees was noted. Revenues are better now than they were last year. Matt didn't think it

was fair to go two years without a salary increase, but suggested basing it on merit versus an automatic across the board raise. Cape is changing their employer contribution to health insurance. He has the numbers for most of the region regarding health insurance matches because he's heading a committee in Cape Elizabeth. Both the Falmouth and Standish Town Offices are now closed on Fridays, although they have expanded their hours on the days that they are open.

Matt asked if COG anticipates any changes in federal or state grants that would expand the income stream. Neal responded that there is a new HUD Livable Sustainable Program that we are exploring. If we get any contract work from towns, that would also help. It was suggested that Neal send something to the towns about the value of COG, while they're in their budget season.

Mike asked if COG was going to hold any more sustainability conferences. Neal responded that we don't have one planned for this spring. The regional planning initiative is our goal for this year.

5. **Discussion: Portland Trails.** Neal reported that Portland Trails approached him about becoming an Associate Member. Gordy thought it was a great fit; they do a lot. Cathy also thought it was great. Associate Members do not pay dues. Typically, we have seats on the boards of our Associate Members (PROP and RC&D).
6. **Annual Meeting Format and Preparation.** Neal explained that the time and cost of putting together the Annual Meeting and Annual Report is great (\$20,000+). According to the Bylaws, we have to have an Annual Report and an Annual Meeting. He wondered if we should be rethinking how we do it – perhaps a noontime meeting with a speaker. Gordy noted that sometimes we get better attendance at our Executive Committee meetings, and liked the idea of holding the Annual Meeting at noontime. Cathy suggested the idea of a biannual meeting when we have a turnover in presidency. However, if we do it every year, she liked the idea of a luncheon meeting with a speaker. Neal suggested meeting in May instead of June and the Committee liked the idea. The date of May 26th, which was a scheduled Executive Committee meeting, was recommended as the date for this year's Annual Meeting at lunchtime.
7. **Updates.**
 - A. SMEDD-EDD Issue. Neal reported that a revised justification letter was sent to EDA in Philadelphia. Neal, Paul Schumacher and Alan Brigham had a conference call with EDA. There are other district issues in Maine that EDA wants to take a hard look at. They need to resolve some issues in the Midcoast. The best way to have this change happen is with other changes within the state. EDA may be redrawing some of the boundary lines. The Economic Development Districts and EDA will be meeting soon and then again in March in PA. Conceptually, it looks like it may be a way to get this restructured.
 - B. CEDS Meeting. The CEDS meeting held on January 27th was an excellent meeting with a very active group. A lot of good ideas came out of the meeting.
 - C. Center for Global Engagement. Deb Andrews who had been volunteering with this effort has found another job. A CDBG grant has been submitted to assist with funding this effort.
 - D. Brownfields. The process is going well. The Brownfields Advisory Committee will be meeting on March 31st.
 - E. Regional Planning Initiative. Neal and Rebecca Schaffner-Tousignant met in Bridgton last night and were well received. They have meetings scheduled in Casco, Raymond and Sebago.

- F. Energy Efficiency Grants. GPCOG helped SAD 61 in developing a \$247,000 grant which has been awarded. They will be doing a retrofit for their high school and will be putting in energy efficient windows. Tomorrow COG is having a meeting at 1:00 to launch the regional energy planning process. Then tomorrow evening we will be holding a workshop on how to form a local energy committee. Additionally, a Lunch and Learn of the presentation Ben Lake gave to the Executive Committee is scheduled for March 5th at GPCOG.
- G. Gordy and Neal will be meeting with Westbrook's new mayor on Friday.

8. Other Business. None.

9. Adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 1:22 p.m.