

GPCOG Steering Committee Minutes
October 20, 2010
12:00 p.m. at GPCOG

In attendance: Gordon Billington, President, Standish; Tom Blake, South Portland; Cathy Breen, Falmouth; Matthew Sturgis, Gray; Mike Reynolds, Raymond (via teleconference)

Guests: Frank Knott, Vital Economy; Mark Ouellette, DECD; Michael Reed, Fairpoint; RoJean Tulk, Fairpoint; Jim Haguewood, Vital Economy;

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

1. **Welcome.** Gordon Billington opened the meeting at 12:05 and welcomed everyone. He provided some background information about GPCOG to the guests. Introductions were made.
2. **Minutes: Steering Committee meeting of August 18, 2010.** *Cathy Breen moved approval of the August 18, 2010 minutes. Tom Blake seconded the motion and all were in favor.*
3. **Revenue Anticipation Note.** To ensure efficient cash flow, GPCOG annually executes a Revenue Anticipation Note (Line of Credit) with Gorham Savings Bank. In the past the note has been used sparingly and promptly repaid. The proposed note is in the amount of \$240,000 at 2.5% and covers the period November 30, 2010 – September 30, 2011.

Tom Blake moved approval that the Executive Director and Finance Director be authorized to execute a Revenue Anticipation Note in the amount of \$240,000 at an interest rate of 2.5% for the period November 30, 2010-September 30, 2011 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 as 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;

VOTED: 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 8038G 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.

The motion was seconded by Cathy Breen and passed unanimously.

4. **Mobilize Maine: Presentation and Discussion.** Neal provided some background on the Mobilize Maine initiative. Mark Ouellette, Director of Business Development at DECD, provided an overview of Mobilize Maine and explained why he is very excited about this

initiative. He stated that he oversees a number of people including Caroline Paras of GPCOG who was recently contracted through DECD to do public development work. Mobilize Maine is a bottom up approach. It brings in the private sector and gives them a strong voice in the process. It is a true public/private initiative. It uses an assets versus needs-based process. He provided an overview of some of the successes of the program. A handout was provided that shows the milestones and the various phases of the process. It also includes information about how well this process has worked in Northern Maine.

Mark spoke about the realignments of the EDDs and how a proposal has now gone to the Governor who strongly supports the changes. Work force development and economic development will be tied together. There are hundreds of private sector people involved. The idea that you can have a unique process in one region is a great thing. This process allows the stakeholders to decide how they want to go. This contemplates an economic development strategy for the state which we have never had.

Fairpoint has been supporting this process for two years. They are trying to get to a process that works for the whole state. Frank explained that Mobilize Maine is following a template of resource support that they have followed for other processes around the country. The ultimate goal is to change the way economic development is funded in this state. An economic development strategy should be done like a public strategy by setting goals, etc. The goal of Mobilize Maine is to achieve 64% funding for economic development from the private sector and then match that with other funding. Mobilize Maine is not to be grant dependent. They are working with the regions to help fund the approach. Vital Economy has worked in 43 states.

Gordy asked what GPCOG's involvement would be. It was explained that there needs to be a core leadership and a core sponsorship organization. The region also needs to be defined. The EDDs play a role of leading and convening the leadership board. GPCOG would be the sponsoring organization as well as begin to create a leadership potential in the region. Caroline Paras would become a resource to coordinate and help facilitate the milestones. Measurable goals would be defined. Mobilize Maine is an action-oriented process; it is not a planning process. If there are opportunities or ideas that come up, Mobilize Maine will help form an action plan to pursue those opportunities. Action is immediately taken and those actions are measured against the goals. Communities should be invested first. When private sector invests, they want to see outcomes. Our initial investment sets the tone. The first level of interest by companies is the concept of developing a consistent economic approach that they can depend on. By breaking down the goals to regional areas, companies see an opportunity.

Neal explained that the challenge for us is that there are so many players trying to do economic development. Getting the people into the room and buying into the initiative is the first step. We can start with the CEDS group; we would also talk to the Chamber. Mark Ouellette has met with Hannaford, Harvard Pilgrim and Kevin Hancock. It is a little more complicated in Portland. Mike Reed explained that getting people engaged may not be as hard as we think. Everyone has decided that we need to move forward as quickly as we can. Each one of the regions is unique but there are underlying things that are similar. Usually there is some initial skepticism. They are now believers in Bangor. Bangor Savings has invested in the Bangor region and they will probably have an interest statewide. A celebration is scheduled in Bangor on December 2nd to celebrate their successes.

Tom B. asked how Mobilize Maine proposes interfacing with groups outside of GPCOG such as the Greater Portland Economic Development Corporation. Mark explained that Mobilize Maine does provide a framework for regional uniqueness. You get focused on where you want to attract business. You have to be very specific and very unique on trying to attract business. GPCOG would be the facilitator for the region. Mobilize Maine would be the umbrella, and the umbrella would have spokes.

Matt noted that the state government has a vital role in this and asked about tax policy that could serve as an incentive for private sector participation. Mark explained that one component is to create a statewide leadership board. This would be determined through a grassroots approach; that is another output of the milestone process. If nothing else happens, you will have a better understanding of what the region has.

Neal will follow up with Mark and Fairpoint and try to arrange a meeting with some key people and staff perhaps in November or December.

- 5. GPCOG – Cumberland County Meeting.** Neal prepared a draft spreadsheet listing GPCOG and County programs that is just for our own use at this time. Peter and Neal have talked and initially they considered having one meeting to exchange information but then decided that more than one meeting would be needed and that a facilitator could be very helpful. Peter suggested using Valerie Landry as a facilitator. Peter, Neal and Valerie have met. Neal explained to the committee that the goal of the process may be to end up with an MOU that would clearly define who does what and who takes the lead on various programs and services. Peter seemed supportive of an MOU. The committee agreed by consensus that using Valerie Landry as the facilitator for the meeting was fine. Gordy recommended that Neal meet with Valerie to advise her of the ultimate goal of the meeting. The meeting with the Commissioners was scheduled for Monday, October 25th, at noon at GPCOG.

There was some discussion about the County Charter. Gordy explained that the County cannot expend public funds to influence decisions of the electorate so their hands are kind of tied on trying to promote the charter.

- 6. HUD Regional Sustainable Communities Grant Award.** This is an opportunity to look at the southern Maine region and ways to develop sustainable strategies for economic development, land use and transportation. The goal is development of a plan with strategies that can be implemented through a trends versus choice scenario process. It is a great opportunity. We will probably need to add staff.
- 7. Adjourn.** The meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m.