

**Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed
Wild and Scenic Rivers Stewardship Council**

**Minutes
Meeting held on February 23, 2022**

In Attendance: Exeter: Nan Quinlan; Hopkinton: Chip Heil, David Augustyn; Richmond: Antonia Bryson, Pete August; South Kingstown: Dennis Migneault; North Stonington: Madeline Jeffery; Stonington: Fred Wagner; West Greenwich: Chris Grube, Pat Lardner; Westerly: Jon Ericson; National Park Service: Jamie Fosburgh, Lauren Bonatakis; Kassi Donnelly, Coordinator.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:04 pm.

Secretary's Report: A. Bryson presented the draft minutes of the November 17, 2021 meeting. F. Wagner moved to approve the minutes as presented, and M. Jeffery seconded. There being no discussion, the motion passed with one abstention and the minutes were approved.

Financial Report: P. August presented the monthly financial report, with appended biweekly accounting summaries. F. Wagner moved to accept the report as presented, and D. Migneault seconded. F. Wagner requested and received a clarification regarding the coordinator's hours. There being no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously and the financial report was approved.

Approval of Budget for Fiscal Year July 1, 2022—June 30, 2023

The draft budget and detailed information budget requests for the 22-23 fiscal year was distributed with the notice of the meeting. The Council held a budget workshop on February 18, at which the Coordinator previewed the draft budget and explained in detail each category of proposed expenditure and the status of unspent funds from prior years. In addition, an explanatory memo was provided with the notice of this meeting. All requests by committees were met in full in the proposed budget. J. Fosburgh briefed the members on personnel changes at NPS which could affect how the budget is organized. C. Heil moved to adopt the proposed budget as presented and F. Wagner seconded the motion. There being no discussion, the motion passed unanimously and the proposed budget was approved.

Status of Coordinator for Fiscal Year July 1, 2022—June 30, 2023

P. August put forth a recommendation to increase the Coordinator's hours for the upcoming fiscal year to 1.0 FTE. He noted that an increase to full-time work for the Council will require it to consider measures for oversight and performance evaluation for the position, which can be worked on subsequent to approval. He informed the members that WPWA fully supports the change. It will benefit the Council by having the Coordinator one hundred percent committed to Council work. It will eliminate confusion over her role and work responsibilities. There was discussion over the duration of the proposed change in hours.

The proposed budget included funding for the coordinator at a level of 0.8 FTE. In order to raise it to 1.0 FTE, an additional \$12,000 (approximation) would be needed for her salary line. Initially P. August suggested that funds could easily be found by rolling over unspent funds from the prior year. However, J. Fosburgh indicated a preference for fully funding the Coordinator salary from the budget year in which it will be spent. P. August then proposed that the required funds be moved from the budget line item for enhancements to the Coordinator salary, and that rollover funds from the prior year be used to make up the enhancements budget line.

C. Heil moved to increase the Coordinator's hours to 1.0 FTE starting July 1, 2022, and M. Jeffery seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. F. Wagner moved to amend the fiscal year 2022-2023 budget to fund the Coordinator's salary at 1.0 FTE by shifting the required funds from the enhancement projects funded amount, and J. Ericson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Project Presentations:

K. Donnelly demonstrated the features of two new maps on the Council's website, one of interest to planners and one to paddlers, and both of general interest to all. The Wild and Scenic Rivers website has a tab for maps, and the first listing under the tab is "watershed and river maps." By clicking on that listing, the user reaches the new conservation inventory. This map provides extensive information on natural characteristics and other environmental attributes of land parcels in the watershed. K. Donnelly requested feedback for another iteration of this map, after which the Council could consider wide distribution. C. Heil asked if prior year aerial photos could be added as a layer. He also suggested members could use the map to identify characteristics of parcels that are the subject of planning board action and evaluate whether to bring them to the attention of the Advisory Committee.

The second listing under the maps tab is "paddling wild and scenic rivers." By clicking on that listing, the user reaches the new "water trails" map. This is an interactive map that provides routes and icons with satellite imagery. K. Donnelly demonstrated how the map works and how it will benefit paddlers. There was discussion of how to distribute the map. K. Donnelly and E. Torello, who was contracted to develop the map, have already attended meetings to show the product, and are planning to collect feedback through end of March. They expect to make revisions and be able to send it to public in May. In addition, the Council is contracting with a writer, Hugh Markey, to draft articles for newspapers and other media. C. Heil urged the Council to consider developing an app for phones based on this work.

Town/Community Updates:

C. Heil reported that the Hopkinton Town Council unanimously approved accepting W&S support for completion of its municipal LID assessment. The Town is about to hire a new town planner, which helped convince them of the timeliness of the W&S offer. South Kingstown Town Council has also approved undertaking the assessment with W&S assistance, and West Greenwich is about to speak to the town manager about it. Exeter will be able to work on it next year. Stonington Town Staff replied that they have a contract with an engineering firm to complete this work. A. Bryson reported that the URI graduate student who is providing assistance to the towns under W&S funding and joint guidance from W&S and RI NEMO has completed his first draft of Richmond's assessment. He is receiving feedback and preparing revisions in anticipation of presenting to the town's Planning Board.

K. Donnelly reported that she and L. Bonatakis interviewed several applicants for the Event Planner position, and subsequently offered the position to Alicia Gordon who has accepted and is negotiating a contract. The first Council-sponsored River Day is scheduled for June 25 and 26.

L. Bonatakis reported that the parties are wrapping up the contract and agreement with Westerly and Horsley Witten for creation of River Corridor Overlay District (RCOD) ordinances.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be a workshop on March 23, 2022. C. Grube reported that a working group is setting up a workshop with WPWA.

Adjournment

N. Quinlan moved to adjourn the meeting, and F. Wagner seconded. The motion passed, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:53 pm.