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NHARPC Meeting

Wednesday, March 26, 2025

1:00 PM to 3:00 PM

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions	1:00-1:05
2. Action items a. Review and Approval of the December 3, 2024 Minutes (enclosed)	1:05-1:10
3. Legislative Updates a. Noah Hodgetts, Principal Planner, NHBEA b. Tim Moore, Commissioner, RPC c. SB 297 may have a direct impact on the RPC's health insurance policies (enclosed)	1:10-1:40
4. Presentation: NH State Commission on Aging Initiatives a. Molly Singer, Age Well NH and b. Jen Buteau, Community Transportation Needs Assessment	1:40-2:25
5. Discussion a. Commissioner Convening Update b. NHMA Partnership: Town and City Articles	2:25-2:40
6. RPC Updates a. Please plan to share current activities of interest from your region	2:40-2:50
7. Public Comment	2:50-3:00
8. Adjourn	3:00

New Hampshire Association of Regional Planning Commissions
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, December 3, 2024
Horseshoe Pond Community Resource Center
26 Commercial Street
Concord, NH 03301

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Jerry Coogan called the meeting to order and asked for introductions.

Members attending: Jerry Coogan, UVLSRPC; Jen Czysz, SRPC; Tim Moore, RPC; David Kerr, LRPC; Steve Buckley, CNHRPC; Michael Tardiff, CNHRPC; Christine Robidoux, SWRPC; Sylvia Von Aulock, SNHPC; Katrin Kasper, SRPC;

Members attending remotely: Meghan Butts, UVLSRPC; Todd Horner, SWRPC;

Guests: Natch Greyes, NHMA; Noah Hodgetts, NHBEA-OPD and Stuart Arnett, ADG

2. Action Items

a. Review and Approval of the September 25, 2024 meeting minutes

Following a motion by S. Buckley and a second by D. Kerr, all members voted in favor of approving the September 25, 2024 minutes. The motion passed.

3. Review of Legislative Service Requests

Noah Hodgetts and Natch Grey reviewed the Legislative Service Requests:

- 1: relative to the transfer of state-owned real property to municipalities.
- 5: relative to accessory dwelling unit uses allowed by right.
- 119: relative to modifying the definition of ADUs.
- 49: allowing subdivision regulations concerning water supply.
- 95: establishing the "partners in housing" program, an initiative under the housing champions fund to assist municipalities, counties, and developers in building workforce housing, and making an appropriation therefor.
- 103: allowing a public body member's presence at a meeting by electronic or other means of communication only if physical presence is unavoidable.
- 112: updating and recodifying the municipal enforcement of the building and fire code.
- 125: requiring recusal of members of zoning boards of adjustment and planning boards in certain circumstances.
- 134: relative to professional limited liability company (PLLC) assistant manager status.
- 144: relative to including municipal public works facilities as eligible capital facilities for the assessment of impact fees.
- 145: relative to subdivision regulations on the completion of improvements and the regulation of building permits.
- 168: relative to the legalization and regulation of cannabis and making appropriations.
- 217: relative to the filling of vacant positions on elected municipal boards and school boards.
- 235: relative to the state building code.
- 257: requiring a landfill permit applicant to submit a report listing potential harms and benefits of the project.
- 276: repealing the alternative procedure for adoption of zoning ordinances.

- 929: making an appropriation for regional drinking water infrastructure.
- 292, 298: relative to a loan forgiveness program for low-income homeowners to build new accessory dwelling units or renovate existing structures into accessory dwelling units.
- 474: permitting in all residentially zoned areas by right the construction of manufactured housing.
- 888: relative to authority for municipalities to regulate mandatory on-site parking requirements.
- 876: relative to zoning restrictions on dwelling units.
- 883: relative to acreage requirements and zoning regarding sewer infrastructure and single-family residential uses.
- 622: establishing a commission to study the New Hampshire zoning enabling act and relative to the effective date of the C-PACER program.
- 714: establishing a commission to study issues related to growth, traffic, and planning and land use for certain towns.

There are several landfill bills that would restrict the building of new landfills in NH. The solid waste advisory group, chaired by Rep. Ebel are tasked to reduce solid waste generated in NH. One of the issues is that NH landfills accept out of state waste, so even as NH reduces its waste, some landfills are looking for similar revenues. This is not just a state issue but a regional issue. NH exports bio-solids to Canada and other states. There have been bills filed in the past proposing the restriction of new landfills.

There are bills files related to Property Assessed Clean Energy, PACE, perhaps aimed at fixing technical issues.

The sign off day for the House is December 8. It is expected we will see house bills to start being published in Mid-December.

4. Discussion Items

a. Commissioner Convening: Set a new date for the spring; topics; theme

S. Von Aulock suggested inviting Erich Zimmermann, the Executive Director of the National Association of Regional Councils, to be the keynote speaker. Erich is a Manchester West HighSchool Graduate. S. Von Aulock will reach out to him to find a date he is available and to aim for April or May. J. Czysz stated we should also invite the New Hampshire Congressional delegation staff to share their perspectives and have a conversation on the state of planning.

b. RPC Funding – BEA support, special legislation and project work

The group discussed the upcoming changes in the Senate and the potential impact on planning funds. J. Coogan stated that Senator Watters is potentially interested in funding for RPCs as well as Senator Rebecca Perkins-Kwoka. This is a difficult conversation this year, but we should start laying groundwork. Senator Sharon Carson from Londonderry is another potential ally, Sylvia will reach out; it might be a good idea to invite her to the NHARPC convening.

J. Czysz asked if BEA has received any feedback on the NH Housing Champions application forms and process. Noah Hodgett replied that advisory committee will reconvene to help refine things as we move forward. There has been some mixed reviews and feedback from some communities.

c. Ideas for Future Speakers

The group discussed potential agencies and speakers:

- Age Well NH Committee: Reach out to the new director. They hired a consultant team for a statewide needs assessment for transportation for elderly vets and disabled.
- Economic Development, CDFA: Katy Easterly Martey
- AARP: Has several programs of interest, including processes for walking audits, Christine FitzPatric is the NH Executive Director, and Patrick McDermott the Volunteer State President.

d. Discussion with Stuart Arnett

S. Arnett of ADG, provided an update on its technical assistance work with Northern Borders and the NH Municipal Association. ADG has a contract with NH BEA to provide technical assistance to potential applicants to the Northern Borders Regional Commission Program. They have created an intake system. There are 4 eligible counties giving it broader statewide interest. NHMA also ran a similar technical assistance program.

The Farm Bill is still in limbo, but 2025 is set and funded. The grant funding available will be slightly higher in 2025. The NBRC Executive Director left and that position is vacant; it is not a political appointment however the federal co-chair is a political appointee. It is likely that the co-chair will come from Senator Collins office in Maine.

The TA program can fund the RPC's \$1250 for pre application assistance and \$1250 for full application. They are looking to expand from application coaching to implementation coaching. The LDD can put in what they think is needed to help recipient implement the project.

Projects will need a direct economic development impact to be competitive. Funding for the LDD with grant writing through the coaching process, 2% for administration, 2-4% for implementation assistance written into the grant budget. In addition to the Catalyst program, there is Timber for Transit and Forest Products.

5. NHARPC – NHMA Partnership

a. Town and City Articles & Webinars

J. Czysz stated there should be a lead person for each article and asked that she and Megan are copied when articles are sent and to include directors on reminders. The next article is due at the end of January. J. Czysz of SRPC will be the coordination lead and all directors will provide input. The topic will be Investment in Regional Planning Gets Results.

6. RPC Updates

D. Kerr reported that the Commission met last week and there was discussion on culvert surveys. A project for Main Street in Plymouth was just approved by their TAC.

M. Tardiff stated that their former planner is returning to CNHRPC.

S. Von Aulock stated that SNHPC is coordinating with RPC directors and planners in their region to organize a plan reading and analysis class. Planners from all RPC's will be invited to attend.

K. Kasper reported that Clean Energy is working with Sol Smart to work with towns on solar ordinances. It is a five-month free service.

Tim Moore stated that RPC has been working with East Coast Greenway. It is expected to be completed in the next 3-4 years. The Legislative Policy Commission has plans for a legislative forum.

J. Czysz stated that SRPC recently held a Commissioner 101 where Commissioners and staff participated in a series of round robin interviews. The latest commissioner quarterly meeting, coordinated with RPC, is a field trip tour on the Downeaster from Dover to Exeter.

S. Von Aulock asked if RPC's could form a partnership for help with rural rail trails through the Timber for Transit program.

7. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

8. Adjourn

Following a motion by M. Tardiff and a second by T. Moore, the group voted unanimously to adjourn at 3:00 P.M.

DRAFT



SB297 (as Amended by 2025-0894s) Fact Sheet

March 11, 2025

Member Group Impacts:

1. You are ultimately responsible for losses.
 - a. **Effective upon passage:**
 - b. You **must** agree in writing that you (as a Member Group) are ultimately responsible for any potential losses incurred while participating in a NH RSA 5-B risk pool, such as HealthTrust.
 - c. You **must** acknowledge that HealthTrust coverage is not insurance, does not function like an insurance company, and is not an insurer.
 - d. HealthTrust **must** collect funds from Members (through assessments or replenishments) in the event of losses that cause HealthTrust reserves to fall below the minimum reserve requirements or insolvency.
 - e. If you terminate coverage, you remain responsible for losses that occurred during the prior year.
 - f. This policy change stands in stark contrast to the current arrangement. Today, HealthTrust (a non-profit New Hampshire corporation) would be the responsible entity. This shifts the ultimate liability to each Member Group.
2. You will need to create a reserve.
 - a. **Effective upon the next setting of fiscal year budgets following passage.**
 - b. In order to participate in a RSA 5-B health risk pool, you **must** create a non-lapsing reserve account held by you as a Member Group.
 - c. This reserve will be utilized to fund assessments for which you may be responsible.
 - d. You **must** fund an amount equivalent to at least 1% of your health coverage contributions each year, until the reserve account is funded to a total of 4% of contributions.
 - e. If you utilize these reserves, you **must** rebuild the fund at a rate of at least 1% the following year, until the 4% funding has been achieved.
 - f. You may **not** participate in a RSA 5-B risk pool for health coverage without having this reserve account in place.
 - g. In the years where there are returns of surplus from HealthTrust, they may be deposited into this reserve account.
3. You **must** pay replenishments and/or assessments when needed. You, as the Member Groups, would utilize the funds created in Section 2 above to pay these costs.
 - a. **Replenishments:**
 - i. **Effective as of closure of HealthTrust Fiscal Year 2026 (for renewals starting January 1, 2027 and July 1, 2027)**
 - ii. If HealthTrust reserves fall below 12% of member group contributions in a fiscal year, HealthTrust **must** include a contingency reserve replenishment amount in the next rating cycle (i.e., FY2028 in the first year) that mandates a recovery to at least that 12% level.

- iii. This replenishment amount will be due from Groups who participated in the fiscal year for which the replenishment is calculated, even if they have terminated membership.

b. **Assessments:**

- i. **Effective upon passage.**
- ii. If HealthTrust reserves fall below 8% of annual paid claims, HealthTrust **must** notify you of a potential required assessment if reserves fall below 4% of annual paid claims.
- iii. If HealthTrust reserves fall below 4% of annual paid claims, you **must** pay an assessment **within 30 days** to satisfy the amount of the deficiency.
- iv. Evaluation occurs at the end of each fiscal month.
- v. Calculated on a pro-rata basis based on contribution amounts.

HealthTrust Reserves:

- 1. HealthTrust contingency reserves (Capital Adequacy Reserves) **must** be between 12% and 16% of Member Group contributions for the current fiscal year.
 - a. The upper limit may be temporarily increased to 18% if we apply for, and are granted, an exception.
 - b. The bill states that the contingency reserve rate ranges will be reviewed by July 1, 2027 and every 4 years thereafter. No actuarially sound standards have been identified as the basis for this review such as those used by the New Hampshire Insurance Department.
 - c. As written, the upper limit is less than the minimum reserve level (\$95 million, which is 20% of contributions for the current fiscal year) that our actuaries have determined is necessary in order to have only a 5% chance of reserves being depleted within 5 years.
 - d. As of the end of FY2024, HealthTrust is at a contingency reserve level equivalent to 7% of contributions and is in the midst of a Board-approved, actuarially-modeled plan to rebuild reserves over a period of three rating cycles. This would halt that rebuild effort at the 16% allowable limit and thereby prevent HealthTrust from accumulating the level of reserves that has been actuarially determined appropriate.
 - e. **If HealthTrust becomes financially impaired, Groups will be responsible to replenish HealthTrust reserves through prescribed replenishments and/or assessments detailed above.**