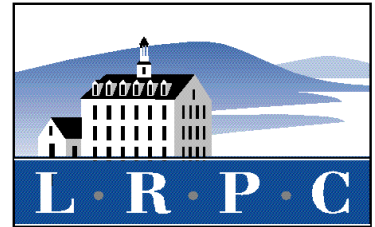


LAKES REGION PLANNING COMMISSION

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MINUTES
LRPC COMMISSION MEETING
 Northfield Town Hall
 Northfield, NH
November 21, 2011

PRESIDING: Stanley Bean, Jr., Chairman

CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.

QUORUM: No

COMMUNITIES PRESENT:

MEMBERS PRESENT:

OTHERS:

Janet Towse (Alexandria)	Francis Vandam
John Cotton (Andover)	Sam Perry
David Kerr (Barnstead)	Glenn Smith
Charlotte McIver (Danbury)	Nick Orgettas, Bob Ward
Scott Dunn (Gilford)	Anne Abear, Steve Gray
Stanley Bean, Jr., Chair (Gilmanton)	Katherine Dawson
Mitch Manseau (Hebron)	Michael Kitch, Laconia Daily Sun
Warren Hutchins, Vice Chair (Laconia)	Rep. Sean C. Cox, Merrimack District 6
Herbert Farnham (Moultonborough)	Chris Porter
Barbara Perry (Moultonborough)	Bruce Dyke
Douglas Read (Northfield)	Other interested parties
Stephen Wingate (Tuftonboro)	LRPC STAFF:
	Kimon Koulet
	Marie Gelinis

1. Welcome and Introduction

Chairman Stan Bean called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m. A motion to declare a quorum for the purpose of conducting business was made and unanimously approved. *M/S/P Dunn/Perry.*

S. Bean welcomed those in attendance and introductions were made. He introduced the topic for the evening, sharing services among towns and other organizations in an effort to reduce costs. The town of Northfield was chosen as the venue because Northfield and Tilton were pioneers in sharing services within the region and the state.

2. Motion for Approval of September 26, 2011 Commission meeting minutes.

S. Bean called for a motion to approve the September 26, 2011 Commission meeting minutes, as presented. A motion to approve the minutes of the September 26, 2011 Commission meeting was made and unanimously approved. *M/S/P Hutchins/Perry.*

3. LRPC Annual Report

A motion to approve the FY 12 Annual Report, as presented, was made and unanimously approved.
M/S/P Kerr/Hutchins.

4. Regionalizing Services: A NH Report Card

Chris Porter, Researcher, New Hampshire Municipal Association, LGC, shared the findings of surveys conducted by the Association on the topic of regionalization. The data collected will serve as a database of efforts on collaboration for those wishing to explore the option. The first survey was conducted in 2010 and recently updated. Fifty-six percent of the municipalities that were surveyed in 2010 responded, accounting for 50% of the New Hampshire population. In 2011, those municipalities were asked to report any changes to the information they provided in 2010. Agreements that municipalities have entered into with at least one other city or town, or plan to enter into, fall under three categories: sharing positions, programs, or functions in some manner; sharing facilities in some manner; and cooperative purchasing. Mr. Porter reviewed the types of agreements that are being entered into in each category and the impediments to regionalization. The most common impediment reported in the survey is not knowing where to find examples of what is being done in neighboring towns. Mr. Porter cited a few examples of existing inter-municipal agreements and those under consideration at this time. In addition to inter-municipal agreements, a number of municipal-county agreements have been entered into or are under consideration at this time. The 2010 survey is currently available on the Local Government Center (LGC) website, as well as an article on the legal framework and ramifications of formalizing a regional agreement. Data from the 2011 survey is still being collected, with 50% of those surveyed responding at this time.

B. Ward inquired whether there are statutory requirements for entering into regional agreements. C. Porter said the umbrella statute that covers such agreements is RSA 53A. The statute is summarized in the article posted on the LGC website.

5. Forging Inter-municipal Connections: Experiences of the Suncook Valley Regional Town Association

Bruce Dyke, Chairman of the Suncook Valley Regional Town Association (SVRTA) and member of the Budget Committee for the town of Chichester, summarized the potential benefits of regionalization, including improved formal communication among towns. In addition, he highlighted the challenges and areas of opportunity in regionalization. He shared success stories in making regionalization and collaboration work, focusing on SVRTA, which is comprised of eight towns that have entered into a health insurance cooperative agreement, road salt contract, and health benefits analysis. SVRTA is currently focusing on areas including police department cooperative opportunities, cooperative electric rate contract, cooperative purchase of fire department turn-out gear, the bulk purchasing of office supplies, and heavy equipment maintenance. He reviewed the steps that need to be taken to get started and shared proven keys to success.

W. Hutchins inquired whether the county commissioners were involved with BCEP (Barnstead, Chichester, Epsom, Pittsfield) entering into the agreement to share transfer station facilities since all but the town of Barnstead are in the same county. Mr. Dyke explained that the only participation from the county was when the sheriff participated in discussions regarding regionalization of the police department. Similarly, Mutual Aid participated in fire department regionalization discussions.

G. Smith inquired about the makeup of SVRTA representatives. Mr. Dyke said the group is comprised 50% of selectmen and 33% town administrators, with the remaining representatives varying from town to town. At least one representative from each town attends the meetings, and sometimes there are two or three representatives from each town.

K. Koulet inquired about the process for posting meetings and keeping minutes, as well as entering into formalized agreements under RSA 53A. B. Dyke noted the meetings are posted and minutes are

kept in accordance with the statute. In the case of the health insurance cooperative agreement, each municipality entered into a separate agreement with LGC. In the case of cooperative purchasing agreements such as fire turnout gear, an agreement is entered into with the vendor based on the expected needs of all communities combined. All agreements are set up with a window of opportunity, so that if someone backs out, it would potentially affect the opportunity for everybody.

In response to a question posed by J. Cotton, Mr. Dyke explained that most of the efforts at this time are focused on getting people interested in cooperative agreements as opposed to the details of how to do so.

6. Outsourcing Law Enforcement to the County: A Current Example

David Kerr, Barnstead Selectman and LRPC Commissioner, reviewed efforts that have been made by the Town of Barnstead to share services with other communities, such as the operation of the transfer station through (Barnstead, Chichester, Epsom, and Pittsfield) BCEP, and a unique agreement within the state of New Hampshire wherein the school building, land, and capital equipment are jointly owned with the town of Alton, and each town's annual contribution is based on school population. As one of the eight towns comprising SVRTA, the town of Barnstead realized approximately \$30,000 in savings the first year it participated in the health insurance cooperative agreement. Although there was some interest shown in exploring options for sharing law enforcement with other communities, no formal steps were taken to do so. A little over a year ago, the sheriff's office made an offer to provide law enforcement services for Barnstead, and the existing police chief was very supportive of it. Subsequent to the offer, a citizens committee was formed to explore whether the offer met the town's needs. Various concerns were brought up at two public hearings regarding the matter, including issues related to coverage, dispatch, town equipment, building maintenance and ownership, job security, and future costs, including what officers are paid. The committee drafted a preliminary contract which has not yet been reviewed by the county or counsel for the town. The committee is still compiling data regarding arrests, convictions, times of day, and prosecutions. Once all the data are available, another public hearing will probably be held, and ultimately, a warrant will be drafted to present at Town Meeting in March.

J. Cotton inquired about response times. Mr. Kerr said concerns exist because the deputy sheriffs all take a vehicle home, which could be a fair distance away. There would be one person physically covering a town at all times except for times when data shows there is little activity. In the event of a severe incident, an adjacent town would also be called to the scene. While there are no officers that live in Barnstead at this time, a particular deputy would be assigned to the town and would respond to incidents.

S. Dunn inquired if the arrangement would result in a financial savings to the town and what Mr. Kerr predicts will happen at Town Meeting. The sheriff's proposal is for two fewer employees and will result in a savings. It is no prediction on the results of the vote that will take place at Town Meeting.

7. Northfield and Tilton: A History of Partnering

Glenn Smith, Northfield Town Administrator, summarized cooperative efforts between the towns of Northfield and Tilton, including the formation of the Tilton/Northfield fire district and the school district, neither of which are municipal agreements. At one time the two towns shared a police department, but complications arose because they are located in different counties. Both towns contract with the same non-profit association to provide recreational services within town. The kinds of programs offered and the hours of recreation are operational decisions that rest with the governing council of that organization. The details of a cooperative agreement for the purchase and

storage of fuel are being worked on at this time. In 2008, Tilton and Northfield joined to bid for trash collection services, but are not contracting with the same vendor. LRPC commissioner W. Crowley spearheaded the effort between the towns of Tilton/Northfield, the school district, and the town of Sanbornton to cooperatively purchase energy from PSNH at a more favorable rate. The greatest example of inter-municipal cooperation in the area is the 11 towns that have joined to assist in renegotiating the cable franchise agreement.

D. Kerr inquired about the structure of the fire district. Mr. Smith said the district is a separate taxing authority/line item on tax bills and sets its own rate. It is a separate municipal organization that is governed by a three member Board of Commissioners.

K. Koulet inquired if the district could expand. G. Smith noted while it is possible, one of the things that needs to be considered is the way individual towns will grow over the long term. For example, at one time the fire service needs of Northfield and Tilton were primarily residential. That is not the case today.

8. Adjourn

S.Bean declared the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.