



RHODE ISLAND BAYS, RIVERS, & WATERSHEDS COORDINATION TEAM

Meeting of February 12, 2014

RI Commerce Corporation
315 Iron Horse Way
Providence, Rhode Island

DRAFT Minutes

Members in Attendance:

Depart. Of Environmental Management: S. Kiernan
Narragansett Bay Commission: T. Uva
Statewide Planning: J. Rhodes
RI Rivers Council: V. Berounsky
Coastal Resources Management Council: J. Willis

Members Absent:

RI Commerce Corp.: M. Walker
RI Water Resources Board: K. Crawley

BRWCT Staff: A. Colt, M. Deciantis

BRWCT Administration

Meeting was called to order at 2:00 pm.

Meeting minutes for the December 2013 meeting were approved with revisions.

Project Updates

Middletown Stormwater Utility District Feasibility Assessment

A summary report on the project will be released soon by the contractor AMEC. The project leads are working with the Middletown Town Council to convene a special meeting of the Council in March to review the report and possibly vote to proceed with continued design of an SUD. Middletown Town Manager Shawn Brown has requested that the Council establish an SUD in the next town budget as a means to finance currently planned stormwater infrastructure projects.

At the Save the Bay Annual Legislators meeting on February 10, the Newport city manager noted the SUD project and expressed concern that Middletown establishing an SUD may inhibit establishment of an island-wide SUD. OWR's Elizabeth Scott has discussed this with Director Coit and follow-up with Newport.

West Warwick Stormwater Utility District Feasibility Assessment

The West Warwick Phase I Report has been issued. Colt and Scott are seeking a follow-up meeting with Town Manager Fred Presley. This is a project for which they might want to consider some additional support for phase II. Uva asked if the Town Council ever approved setting up an SUD.

Colt answered no. They only approved going forward with the Phase I study.

Upper Bay Regional Stormwater Utility

The Upper Bay Regional Stormwater Utility Assessment Phase I report will be issued in late February. Project leaders are applying for \$500,000 in support from Sandy Recovery Act funds, which would be bundled with BRWCT funding to the scope of the phase II. Colt said if they receive the \$500, 000, it will require re-scoping of what the phase II project. Liz Scott will meet with municipal officials to discuss the project and solicit support for phase II.

Upper Bay Water Quality Stakeholders Project

Colt expects that the RFP for this project will be issued soon. Uva asked if Colt decided to have a mandatory pre-bid meeting. Colt said yes. Uva asked if there will be a presentation or if they will just answer questions. Kiernan said someone from purchasing usually does the basic introduction and they will do a brief overview and then address questions.

WWTF Climate Change Risk Assessment

Colt reported that this project is now partially supported by Statewide Planning and that the RfP will be issued shortly.

Water Resources Board Water Supplier Database Development

Colt reported that this project (and the Freight Planning project) will be moved to FY15 budget.

USGS Contracts

Colt reported that DEM and WRB have finalized negotiations over the total costs of the USGS monitoring contracts. The cost will total about \$282,000, \$32,000 of which will come out of the BRW Fund. Colt distributed a summary of the USGS contract expenditures over FY14 and the first quarter of FY15. He noted that charges from the last quarter of FY14 will be paid in the first quarter of FY15.

Kiernan stated that DEM and WRB will continue to work USGS to find additional savings. There has been a national effort for Congress to put more money into a national stream gage network, with a state matching requirement. Colt asked if there is any engagement with the RI congressional delegation on this. Kiernan replied that once the letter is complete, it can be shared. Currently, there is The USGS national plan for the RI Stream Gage Network consists of about 900 core gages, of which in Rhode Island there are up to four.

Current FY14 Spending and Initial FY15 BRWCT Budget

Colt distributed an update on FY14 spending and an initial draft of an FY15 budget. He reported that the rollover from FY14 to FY15 is projected to be about \$461,000. He also projects that total revenues for FY14 from the uniform septage disposal fee will be about \$436,000. (Trans-Atlantic cable fees are fixed at \$36,000 a year.) BRWCT personnel costs are running about \$20,000 less than originally projects. Total expenditures for FY14 are estimated to be \$495,000 of which \$267,000 has been spent to date.

Willis asked if Colt is being queried by DOA about unexpended funds. Colt replied that he has been asked periodically and he has explained that the projects are in the pipeline. If the scrutiny increases, they are in good shape to explain where they are and why it's important to keep unexpended funding in place.

Colt asked for discussion and agreement on how to allocate available funds in the FY15 work plan. Specifically, should the BRWCT run a full-fledged proposal competition as was done last year? Uva said that the BRWCT would benefit from having a strong Annual Work Plan that could be widely distributed publicly. Willis asked how Colt thought the agency proposal selection process went last year. Colt replied that he thought it went well, in that there were sufficient funds available to fund all of the agency submitted proposals and the projects to be funded were well thought out and timely. He expressed concern about the delays with regard to some of the projects starting up in a timely manner. Uva emphasized that the work plan should focus on unique projects that "cross the borders" of individual agencies and activities that highlight the value of the BRWCT as an interagency commission.

Colt noted that the BRWCT will again be asked to cover a large percentage of the USGS water monitoring contracts and that the RI Rivers Council has asked for BRWCT support. In addition, the BRWCT may wish to look at continuing to provide support to the Town of West Warwick so that they may complete a full stormwater utility district feasibility assessment. Colt estimated that even after covering these funding needs, the BRWCT still could have about \$100,000 in unexpended funds to allocate.

Rhodes suggested they consider additional staff for the Coordination Team to assist with the Economic Monitoring Collaborative and the Science Advisory Collaborative. Colt said the best he could do at this point would be to contract out for support, but that he would most likely not be given permission to hire someone full-time, particularly as that would affect the DEM FTE cap. Kiernan advised that if the BRWCT wishes arrange contractual labor support, it has to be proposed in time for inclusion in the Governor's

budget. Willis suggested that one way to bring in additional help is to develop an agreement with URI.

Uva stated that an additional staff person could be an important asset to the BRWCT in coordinating interactions between agencies, organize workshops, and solicit additional grants. It could be a one year position that could be reevaluated annually depending on funding.

The BRWCT reached consensus that it would not conduct a formal agency proposal solicitation for FY15 work planning and instead requested that Colt work with individual agencies and other stakeholders such as West Warwick to develop a suite of projects for funding consideration and provide that information at the BRWCT's next meeting in April.

BRWCT 2013 Annual Report

Colt distributed copies of the draft 2013 Annual Report and asked for comments and recommended edits by the end of February. He would incorporate final comments and circulate the Final Report to the BRWCT by email for final approval. The report covers calendar year 2013, but it also provides summary information on all of the projects funded by the BRWCT since 2010.

Colt asked for the BRWCT to review and comment in particular on the conclusion of the report. Two key activities identified for pursuit in 2014 are updating the SLP and establishing a more comprehensive annual work plan and budget process that reflects the BRWCT's statutory mandate.

Uva reiterated his concern that the BRWCT still does not have an Economic Monitoring Collaborative. He suggested that Colt include something in the report about how they the Economic Monitoring Collaborative has not been active since the RI Economic Policy Council was disbanded in 2007, and the BRWCT hopes to revive the collaborative, possibly within the next year.

Rhodes stated that the legislation that changed the name of the RI Economic Development Corporation to the RI Commerce Corporation essentially returns the state to the economic policy council model of developing strategic guidance for state economic development. Perhaps the BRWCT could work with new advisory bodies that are going to be set up, such as the new Council of Economic Advisors.

Uva added that it is important to explain that they have not ignored this mandate of the BRWCT. Part of the mission of the BRWCT is to fill management and development gaps and demonstrate the economic benefits of doing more to protect and restore water resources in the state in order to justify to the General Assembly requests for additional support.

Kiernan stated that the conclusion of the report should speak to the value of the BRWCT in promoting inter-agency coordination, facilitating projects that multiple agencies care about and to take credit for those accomplishments. She agreed too that the report should acknowledge that the BRWCT's ambitious statutory mandates had not yet been fully achieved.

Willis suggested that Colt tag each of the projects listed in Appendix II to particular SLP Implementation Priorities, and to insert sidebar texts highlighting BRWCT accomplishments. Uva agreed that there should be more in the report highlighting BRWCT accomplishments. Willis noted the large marine event assessment and the port marketing opportunities studies as important accomplishments.

Rhodes noted that the BRWCT reached consensus on the investment of nearly \$3 million in key projects. He recommended that the report emphasize that the agencies have together allocated this substantial amount of funding toward key needs in a coordinated manner.

Keirnan added that coordination is also about building relationships between agencies and exchanging valuable, useful information between individuals and programs. These relationships have enabled the BRWCT to be more strategic in deciding where to put this money in order to make a difference. Almost all the projects have multi-agency angles to them and that is a fundamental goal of the BRWCT.