

DRAFT MINUTES

CRCOG FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Via Zoom
Wednesday, November 17, 2021
10:30 a.m.

Attendees

John Adams
Dave Kilbon
Chris Kervick
Lori Spielman
Lee Erdmann
John Carson
Mohamed Alkadry
Hedy Ayers
Doug Fischer
Diane Smith

CRCOG Staff

Pauline Yoder
Lyle Wray
Tim Malone

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:36 a.m. by Vice President Dave Kilbon. He welcomed the Board.

2. Action Item: Approval of Minutes (March 12, 2020 Meeting)

Lori Spielman made a motion to approve the Minutes of March 12, 2020 as presented. Hedy Ayers seconded the motion and it carried unanimously by voice vote.

3. Action Item: Membership Renewals

Tim gave an update on expiring member terms. Tim noted that the following terms had expired: Chip Beckett, John Carson, Steve Cassano, Mary Glassman, Richard Porth, Brandon Robertson. Tim suggested that a motion be made to extend those terms, pending acceptance by the individual members.

John Carson made the motion. It was seconded by Lee Erdmann. The motion carried unanimously by a voice vote.

Tim also reported that the following terms would expire this year: Mohamad Alkadry, Hedy Ayers, and Chris Duffy. He noted that Chris Duffy was no longer with Leadership Greater Hartford. Hedy Ayers and Mohamad Alkadry indicated that they wish to continue on the board. Lee Erdmann made a motion to extend the terms of Hedy Ayers and Mohamad Alkadry. It was seconded by Lori Spielman. It passed unanimously on a voice vote.

4. Action Item: Officer Vacancies

Tim Malone reported that the current slate of officers needed to be renewed. Currently, Steve Cassano is president, Dave Kilbon is Vice President, Lee Erdmann is Secretary, and Chip Beckett is Treasurer.

John Carson made a motion to extend Dave Kilbon's term as Vice President. It was seconded by John Adams. It passed unanimously.

John Adams made a motion to extend Lee Erdmann's term as Secretary. Hedy Ayers seconded it. It passed unanimously.

Lee Erdmann made a motion to extend Steve Cassano's term as President. It was seconded by Mohamad Alkadry. It passed unanimously.

It was determined that the treasurer position should be held open pending discussion with Chip Beckett.

Tim Malone also noted that the following CRCOG Policy Board officer positions are open due to recent elections and retirements: Chair, Treasurer, and Vice Chair. Each officer also gets a spot on the CRCOG Foundation board.

5. Executive Director Interviews

Pauline Yoder reported on the process of selecting a new executive director for CRCOG. They are seeking a second round of applicants currently. Hoping to have interviews on December 8. The goal is to have a new director early next year.

6. Work in Progress

- EDA CARES Act Grant
 - Tim reported that CRCOG, along with the other COGs in Connecticut applied for a grant under the EDA's CARES Act funding. That grant was denied, but DECD followed up with a smaller grant application involving CRCOG and five other regions. That grant was recently approved. CRCOG is currently waiting for grant paperwork from DECD, which is expected later this week. The grant will fund

four projects: CEDS update to deal with COVID impacts; a disaster recovery coordinator; technical assistance for small businesses, and a series of webinars and meetups for entrepreneurs.

- EDA BBB Grant Application
 - Tim reported that CRCOG, in partnership with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Capital Workforce Partners, the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology, the City of Hartford, and others, applied for a grant from the EDA's Build Back Better program. The grant application is focused on the advanced manufacturing sector in the knowledge corridor.
- CEDS Update/Revision
 - Tim reported that, using the CARES Act grant from the EDA, CRCOG will be updating its 2019 CEDS soon. He also reported that many of the activities in the 2019 CEDS have seen significant progress. Many of the projects, such as the college student retention and industry sector partnerships activities, have been substantially advanced by other partners. AdvanceCT is launching a CampusCT program (modeled on Campus Philly). The Governor's Workforce Board, in collaboration with CWP, has launched an industry sector partnership focused on the tech industry.
- Governor's Workforce Council coordination
 - As noted in the previous item, the Governor's Workforce Council has been busy starting new initiatives. They have an Economic Strategy now that shares many principles and projects with the CRCOG CEDS. Staff will continue to coordinate with them on implementation.
- Economic Impact Study of Rail Improvements
 - Tim reported that CRCOG initiated a study of the potential economic impacts of reestablishing frequent rail service between Springfield and Worcester (with connections to Boston). The study found that there would be a 10 to 1 payback over 30 years. Lyle Wray noted that so far nobody had taken issues with the numbers or methodology, indicating it was likely sound. They also reported that CRCOG worked with PVPC on a new ridership estimate for the service. The original MassDOT estimate omitted service to Hartford. When that service is added in, ridership increases by roughly 50%. They also reported that CRCOG and UConn are hosting a webinar on the study on November 18.
 - Dave Kilbon asked where this project stands in relation to the recently adopted infrastructure act.
 - Lyle noted that it will take state action to move it forward and that most of the money needs to be spent in Massachusetts.
 - Lee Erdmann asked how East-West rail interacts with the North Atlantic Rail initiative.
 - Lyle answered that the two projects complement each other. Most rapid rail systems in the world have strong regional rail networks as well to provide connections to smaller destinations.
 - Hedy Ayers asked if the webinar will be recorded and posted to the website.
 - Yes, that can be done. We can also send a link to the recording to the foundation members.

- Mohamad Alkadry asked if there was a coalition of affected communities that could get together to advocate for the rail service.
 - It was noted that Mayor Bronin is actively promoting the service. Other towns could get involved as well.
- Tim noted that one of the next steps is to look at cost estimates, which have been criticized as being too high.
- Lyle added that the next CEDS update could be sent to the foundation for input.
- John Carson noted that it will be important to figure out how much of the COVID weirdness will stick around in the economy.

7. Other Business

- Lee Erdmann asked if Lyle would be willing to join the foundation board after he fully retires.
 - Lyle responded that he would be interested.
- John Carson asked if a summary of high points from item six could be sent to the foundation. Lyle responded that they could send out more verbose minutes that would include that summary.
- Dave Kilbon noted that a lot of stuff was going to be happening soon and that it would be good to have another meeting in January or February.

8. Adjournment

Lee Erdmann moved to close the meeting. It was seconded by Lori Spielman.

Unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30am.