

**Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership
Finance & Budgeting Standing Committee
June 3, 2021**

Approved Minutes

Members Present: Keith Ross, Whit Sanford, Rebecca Stone

Others: Hank Art, Board Chair; Lisa Hayden, NEFF/Admin. Agent; Glen Ayers, public

- Meeting was called to order at 2:03 p.m.
- Approval of minutes from April 1, 2021 was deferred to the next meeting.
- Revisit discussion of duties and focus areas for the committee; Committee Mission statement:
 - K. Ross noted that the Committee is responsible for Partnership finances and accounting. He will send out a draft of the Committee Mission statement. The MTWP anticipates getting funding from the state to further goals, potentially through Liaison with EOEEA and USFS, or perhaps an environmental bond, though there is not yet any funding or accounts to manage. The MTWP will need to get an Accountant eventually.
- Agree on plan for presenting Committee priorities at the June 8th Board/Annual Meeting:
W. Sanford suggested three items for priorities:
 1. Create a 2021-22 Budget that includes: NEFF budget and projects proposed by the Standing Committees.
 2. Develop the Project needs & MTWP Funding Spreadsheet – grants, earned revenues, major donors, “membership” support, etc.: Because most grants require match, this tracking sheet could help to connect the dots between various proposals.
 3. Create a Chart of Accounts to manage the finances of the Partnership. (Whit offered to share an example Chart of Accounts from a Watershed Council she has worked with.)
 - **Whit moved and Rebecca seconded these priorities. The Committee unanimously approved.** K. Ross stated that he anticipated the Committee could focus on these topics in the next two meetings, potentially over the summer as the MTWP expects projects to get underway.
- Updates on recent and pending grant/funding applications for MTWP:
 - A request for direct federal funds for the MTWP has complications and may require legislative action. It seems that without knowing where a Forest Center will be located and its detailed purpose, it will be difficult to secure funding for it, so a needs assessment of the envisioned functions for a center should come first.
 - Board Chair H. Art suggested that the Finance & Budgeting Committee should have a liaison with EOEEA and the Forest Service to continue conversations about where more stable funding for the Partnership could come. He shared a May 4 letter from Congressman Richard Neal’s office relaying that they had received hundreds of requests for funding to be considered in an infrastructure bill and could not at this time include funding for a forest center or climate resilience program, but they remain ready to work with the MTWP to find other sources of funding. A Neal staffer met with the Ex. Committee and could be invited to a future Finance Committee meeting.

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- Administrative Agent/Board Chair updates: L. Hayden reported on efforts to develop a proposal concept to the Forest Service based on pilot riparian restoration areas within the MTWP and the potential to seek matching funds from the EOOEA regional grant – that could fund climate resilience plans for forests, and riparian sites, particularly in downtowns or access points for use of rivers. Conway School students could be involved to analyze those sites.
 - L. Hayden and H. Art are also tracking other Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program grants to know what is going on in the region. MVP grants to Adams and Williamstown to organize and set up a pilot forest resilience program are progressing.
 - Other Standing Committees are organizing and the Agent has been busy coordinating and posting those meetings.

- Schedule next meeting as needed: A tentative date of July 15 was agreed upon.

- Public Comment: Glen Ayers spoke, noting that time has elapsed since the Partnership Plan was presented and he said it would be useful to conduct some kind of survey or public process with the towns as the Plan is updated. He suggested that the MTWP could seek “Net zero plan” funding from the state to address long-term carbon storage and on-the-ground measurement of the carbon actually stored in the region, to pursue a carbon credit program.

- The meeting adjourned at 2:44 p.m.