



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
January 12, 2010

PLACE: Northern Maine Development Commission  
DATE: January 12, 2010 8:00 a.m.

Attendance: Chair Virginia Joles, Nate Berry, Mike Bosse, Dave Cambridge, Eileen Carey, Patti Crooks, Jim Davis, Steve Fitzpatrick, Jon McLaughlin, Jason Parent, Dr. Reginald Reed, Roger Roy and Bruce Sandstrom.

Members Excused: Bob Clark, Dr. Richard Cost, Doug Morrell, Linda Smith, Tim Vernon and Dr. Don Zillman.

Others Present: Phil Bosse-Senator Collins' Office, Barb Hayslett-Congressman Michaud's Office, Lisa Pohlmann and Dillon Voorhees, Natural Resources Center, Ryan Bushey-Louisiana-Pacific, Walt Elish, Judy Dinsmore, Alain Ouellette and Ruby Bradbury.

1.) Call to Order:

Chair opened the meeting at 8:00 a.m. and welcomed everyone.

2.) Welcome Members and Guests:

Chair asked everyone to introduce themselves.

3.) Education Session:

Mr. Voorhees explained that the mission of Natural Resources Council of Maine (NRCM) is to protect, restore and conserve Maine's environment now and for future generations. Currently the organization has approximately 11,000 supporters across Maine and beyond.

A. State and federal advocacy.

- Watersheds work in water quality
- Reduce threats posed by toxic chemicals
- Protecting Northwoods

Energy challenges – petroleum, wood, waste/other, hydro, nuclear, natural gas. Most of it is neither clean, affordable nor domestic. Climate change is impacting Maine's forest and habitat.

Big challenge is cost of fossil fuel dependency. Maine exports 5-7 billion a year to pay for fossil fuels including gas, heating oil and fuel to run our power plants. He explained that affordable opportunities are abundant.

Maine ranks in the top 2 states nationally for wind power. Wind farms could represent a \$6 billion dollar investment in our state. Maine has an abundance of wind power opportunities. We are building industries in wind energy. Wind development has the potential to bring millions of dollars of tax revenues for the state, long term jobs and \$6 million annually in lease payments. Nearly 300 Maine businesses have been contracted to do work related to wind farm construction since 2005.

B. Federal climate and clean energy legislation:

Key legislation in 2010 with significant involvement by Senators Snowe and Collins

Long term emission reduction targets

Major funding for renewable and energy efficiency

Support for low-income consumers and industry

This is a significant opportunity to help Maine achieve its clean energy and energy independence ambitions. Maine has support from local businesses as well as on a national level.

C. Energy efficiency:

Energy efficiency represents investments that pay and save more than what they cost \$300 million for expanded energy efficiency investments.

Weatherizing is one of the goals for energy efficiency.

Mr. Voorhees indicated that NRCM is doing many things to advance energy efficiency in Maine.

Following Mr. Voorhees there was a Q&A session.

Dr. Reed asked about natural gas. Mr. Voorhees indicated that natural gas isn't used much for heating, but would like to see more of it being used. Natural gas is used more for generating electricity. Good for combined heat and power.

4.) Approval of October 14, 2009 Minutes:

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. McLaughlin, seconded by Mr. Berry to approve the October 14, 2009 LEAD meeting minutes as presented.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

5.) Financial Report:

Profit and Loss Statement:

(Income)

Dues: \$0

Interest Income: \$9.71

Total Income: \$9.71

(Expenses)

Transportation Fund Expenses: \$1,931.48

Total Expenses: \$1,931.48

Net Income: -\$1,921.77

Balance Sheet:

Operating Cash: \$32,906.57

Accounts Receivables: \$2,400

Total Assets: \$35,306.57

Deferred Dues: \$9,500

Deferred Income: \$4,500

Total Liabilities: \$14,000

Opening Balance Equity: \$12,740.92

Retained Earnings: \$5,534.02

Net Income: \$3,031.63

Total Equity: \$21,306.57

Total Liabilities and Equity: \$35,306.57

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Sandstrom, seconded by Mr. Roy to accept the Financial Report as presented.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

6.) Committee Reports:

a. Advocacy/Legislation/Programs:

\*Aroostook Day at the Legislature to be held February 3, 2010. LEAD members will go before the house to discuss LEAD issues at 10:00 a.m. on February 3. Social and dinner will be that evening at the Senator Inn with the same agenda as last year's event.

\*Peter Gore Conference call:

At this time, a conference call was made to Peter Gore for an update on issues from this session. Mr. Gore indicated that the Legislature is using a portion of the joint rules to reference bills directly instead of going between the bodies as they normally do. He indicated that there are many public hearings. He stated that February will finish up the hearing process and March will focus on debates. By April 2, they will be done, which is two weeks earlier than normal.

Mr. Gore stated that during the emergency session, only bills that are of an emergency nature will be discussed. Legislative Council has to rule on every legislative bill. There are 300-400 bills this session, which is down from the previous sessions.

Mr. Gore announced that the big issue this session is the supplemental budget. The budget has a \$43,000,000 short fall. The Appropriations Committee is working on the budget and is not in favor of raising taxes. There will be approximately \$400,000,000 cuts. At this time there have been discussions on increasing cigarette tax along with other taxes.

The budget will overshadow everything the Legislature does this session. He indicated that there will be a public hearing Thursday, January 14, in which the Labor Committee will propose that employers provide sick leave for full and part time employees. He stated that this would be similar to a mini FMLA leave. Reasons are very broad. Family member leave is extremely broad. There is cost associated with this for these employers that do not have sick leave. Because of the broad nature of the bill, it will affect all employers even those who currently provide sick leave. This will part of statutory rights for employees.

He stated that if this passes, we will be the only state in the country to provide this to their employees.

Mr. Gore suggested that we contact our Legislators with our concerns. They will also accept written testimony if members can't attend in person. Gore feels this is a wrong time for this type of legislature. Employers lose flexibility in their workplace.

Mr. Gore is asking for letters outlining the impact on businesses in the area.

Mr. Gore informed the LEAD Board on LD 1626 – unemployment insurance. He indicated that rates for unemployment will go up 65%. This will eliminate the waiting period for eligibility for unemployment insurance due to vacation pay when laid off. This will allow vacation pay and unemployment insurance benefits to be paid at the same time. He indicated that the Maine State Chamber is opposing this bill. He asked that correspondence for this bill be emailed to him at: [pgore@mainechamber.org](mailto:pgore@mainechamber.org)

Other bills being discussed is the prosthetic device mandate and the treatment for Autism mandate.

The Autism mandate will shift cost from the patient to the insurance carrier. He stated that the Chamber will also be opposing these two bills as it will add cost to business premiums.

Mr. Gore stated that the State of Maine should not be making any decisions on mandates at this time.

Chair for the Labor Committee is Senator Troy Jackson who is a co-sponsor on the paid sick leave bill.

b. Business Recognition:

Ms. Crooks will work with Mr. Bosse and will get back to the LEAD board on their progress.

c. Energy:

It was announced that Carl Flora will lead this committee and updates will be forthcoming.

d. Entrepreneurship:

Ms. Smith and Dr. Zillman are chairing this committee. It was announced that they are moving forward with planning this year's event. The announcement will be during the third week in February during Entrepreneurship Week. The winner will be determined in June at NMCC and Momentum Aroostook's wine tasting event.

e. Membership:

The LEAD Executive Committee continues to work on this effort.

f. Publicity/Political Forums:

Mr. Parent and Dr. Zillman are working on a Gubernatorial Debate again if LEAD board authorizes the event.

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Roy, seconded by Mr. McLaughlin to authorize Mr. Parent and Dr. Zillman to begin preparation for a Gubernatorial Debate.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

g. Transportation:

Mr. Elish reported on the rail issue. He explained that MDOT hired a consulting firm who prepared a business case for them. The consultant interviewed users and shippers of the rail line.

He stated that MM& A will be filing for abandonment in February. Negotiating is going on with MM&A and MDOT. If no one steps up to purchase, MDOT will pull up the rails. Once this happens we won't get the rail back to serve the companies that are currently using rail services.

Mr. Elish stated that the state has no money to purchase this line, and at this time, we don't know where the money will come from to purchase it.

Chair explained that she has been working with the Cities of Presque Isle and Caribou to bring them together to discuss where we are at this time. She indicated that the final EIS is now available. She explained that this is the “comment phase” and we have until January 22 to give comment. Mr. Elish stated that LEAD should have a comment on the transportation issue itself, not necessarily the route.

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Roy, seconded by Dr. Reed to provide a comment in support of the transportation issue with a letter to follow up.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

Chair discussed the highway weight limits with the Board. She indicated that the issue is traveling on the interstate versus going through the towns. She stated that this was a one year pilot project. Chair will be providing a letter for the Delegation indicating our support for increasing the weight limits. She stated that we could possibly hold a reception on February 19 while Senator Collins is in town and coordinate it with the Kiwanis meeting program.

Mr. Elish reviewed the Maine Tomorrow Contract for 2010 with the LEAD Board. He stated that LEAD has contracted with John Melrose for the past 2 years. At this month’s Executive Committee, the contract was reviewed with discussion on the increase from \$12,000 to \$16,000 for next year. Mr. Elish indicated that one of the reasons for the increase is that Mr. Melrose will be visiting the County to meet with the LEAD Board. He stated that this can be negotiated and would save on some of the cost. He reminded the Board that the \$16,000 is “not to exceed”. In the past, we used the \$5,000 provided by the Maine Better Transportation and the monies from the Cities of Caribou and Presque Isle. This year we will not have all of those monies to help.

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Berry, seconded by Mr. Roy to accept the 2010 contract between John Melrose and LEAD as presented.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

7. Other Business:

The weekly legislative calls will begin on Wednesday, January 20 at 12:00 noon. Participants were asked to RSVP to Ms. Dinsmore and to provide her with topics they wish to discuss with their Legislators.

Chair indicated that due to lack of response to her email for a written consent to provide support for the Transportation Bond, a \$100 donation was provided.

Ms. Crooks discussed the “3-Ring Binder project” that will run fiber in Maine. She explained that these rings will connect in Fort Kent and down route 11 to the Bangor area. It will take a three-year timeframe to complete. The project will bring fiber to areas in Aroostook County that do not have it presently. She stated that presently, Maine has a transportation charge from here to Portland. This project will eliminate this transportation charge.

Chair announced that the LEAD Bylaws will be mailed for approval via mail.

Mr. Ouellette handed out the Small Business Energy Cost Reduction Program (SBECRP) brochure and explained that the SBECRP will answer energy questions by explaining where and how a facility is costing money, and then how to apply the best available technologies to save money. The project will work with mechanical and electrical technicians to ensure that a busien4ss have customized solutions to their energy problems.

Mr. Elish announced that the Mobilize Maine group will hold the IT and Energy cluster meetings on January 20 and 21 at the Northeastland. At these cluster meetings we will identify niches that would be beneficial to Aroostook County.

8. Motion to adjourn:

There being no further business to conduct, Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 9:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Davis  
Secretary

JD/jd