

# Housatonic River Commission

*“to coordinate on a regional basis the local management and protection of the Housatonic River Valley in northwestern Connecticut”*

## Minutes of the Special Meeting on January 23, 2024

via Google Meet

Christian Allyn – North Canaan – P  
Jack Anstine – North Canaan – A  
Matt Gallagher–Canaan (Falls Village)– A  
Ellery Sinclair – Canaan (Falls Village)–p  
Stacie Weiner – Salisbury – P  
Gordon Whitbeck – Salisbury – p  
Jim Saunders – Sharon – P

William R. Tingley, Chairman – Sharon – P  
Phil Hart, Vice-chairman – Cornwall – P  
Barton Jones – Cornwall – P  
Jesse Klingebiel, Secretary – Kent – P  
Pending new commissioner– Kent  
Marc Andreotto, Treasurer – New Milford – P  
Robert Gambino – New Milford – A

(Acronyms listed on the last page)

Also present were: Madeline Scherff – Project Manager; Liz Lacy – NPS; and Mike Jastremski – HVA

### **Mr. Tingley called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.**

Madeline Scherff, the new Project Manager, was introduced by Mr. Tingley. She is a UCONN graduate who has worked for the State of Connecticut Wildlife Division and, most recently, as a park manager for the State of Vermont.

### **The minutes of the December 12, 2023, special meeting were approved as written.**

**Treasurer's Report and NHCOC Financial Reports** – Mr. Andreotto reported \$4,673.70 in the NHCOC-HRC subaccount. Of the total awarded NPS funds of \$150,000, there is a balance of \$112,500. Of the first transfer to NHCOC of \$37,500, there is a balance of \$17,142.52.

**Ms. Weiner made a motion to pay Susan Francisco's December hours invoice for \$322.50. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.**

### **Review contract between HRC and HVA (contract with HVA subbed to HRC)**

Ms. Lacy described the responsibilities of the new Project Manager which include developing requests for proposals and contracts and whatever is necessary for disbursement of Wild and Scenic funds to implement projects included in the annual work plans. She will liaise between HRC and contractors that are hired for HRC projects, administer HRC's communications, including websites, social media, and other public outreach, and support the HRC administrative assistant who's responsible for meeting announcements, agendas, and meeting minutes.

It was made clear that Ms. Scherff is a full-time employee of HVA and that 50% of her time will be spent working as a contractor for HRC. HRC Wild & Scenic funds will go to HVA for that work.

**Mr. Jones made a motion to give Mr. Tingley authority to review and consummate the contract for Ms. Scherff's services. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.**

**Mr. Hart made a motion to authorize Mr. Tingley to sign an agreement with the Cornwall Conservation Trust (located at 7 Railroad Square in West Cornwall) for HRC office space and services for up to \$205 per month from February 1 through December 31, 2024.**

### **Communications**

Mr. Klingebiel was contacted through the website by Housatonic Valley Regional High School students in December and shared HRC background information with them via Zoom. Their project on the Housatonic will include a video production.

The Kent Land Trust owns property along the Housatonic where the Marble Valley Farm is located. They requested HRC support for the addition of a greenhouse tunnel (metal frame covered with plastic) at the organic farm. Mr. Klingebiel said that it is part of standard operations and gave his approval on behalf of the HRC.

Brian Wood will be conducting a site visit at the FirstLight hydroelectric plant in Falls Village on January 25,

### **Zoning Permit Applications for HRC review**

- Update - River Woods Subdivision (Honey Hill) – North Canaan – The application was withdrawn the day before the North Canaan P& Z January 9 meeting. The item will go off the agenda for the time being.

### **Workplan Project Status:**

For each of the projects in the workplan, there needs to be a scope (description) of the project, contractors for the work, and cost. This is necessary in order to spend the money by September 30. It would be good to have potential or actual contracts ready for approval at the February 13 meeting. The HVA template is very easy to work with. Then the HRC ad hoc and/or executive committee can work out final drafts to bring before the full HRC for approval.

- Invasive Plant Management – Mr. Allyn and Bob Gambino have been working on this project, and Mr. Gambino will present a synopsis of plans at the February meeting.
- Visitor Use Management – HVA's RIO program will be a separate contract and deals with managing activities along the river.
- Update Management Plan – Jackie Dias and Ms. Lacy continue to work on updating the Management Plan.
- Website Improvements – Once the logo is ready for approval at the February 13 meeting, Julie Saxton can continue work on the website.
- Access Survey and Recommendations – Mr. Jones has asked HVA's Mr. Jastremski and Rodrigo Pinto to write up a contract for the survey which would include listing the property owners along the 41 miles of the river, along with formal and informal access sites with the goal of having a complete inventory of riverfront properties.
- Ruggles landing Site Plan – Mr. Allyn met with an attorney today about the incorporation of the Friends of Ruggles Landing. He will be getting a PO box and solidifying the list of directors.
- Organizational Development – Mr. Jones referenced a memo about how the Farmington River goes about project work and suggested that the HRC create various subcommittees to divide work going forward. Each can work through details and then present a consolidated report to the commission. Ms. Lacy, who helped with the Farmington River Coordinating Committee organization, will work with Ms. Scherff. Mr. Jones recommended visiting the Farmington River website.
- Program Coordinator – done.
- Stormwater/Stream Crossing Surveys – Mr. Jastremski is working on it.
- Educational Programs – Funds budgeted are going to pay the admin assistant and communications.
- Signage – Ms. Weiner has the specifications for signage (they will say Housatonic River and include the NPS Wild & Scenic logo), and she and Mr. Allyn are working to identify locations. They will be in touch with Eric Adams, Connecticut DOT administrator, for approval. When they know

exactly what the signs (highway grade) will look like and where they will be installed, they can go out to bid.

At the end of the projects discussion, everyone was reminded that they need to be in touch with Ms. Scherff along the way as she will be keeping track of progress.

### **Mutual Concerns & Future Agenda Items**

Mr. Sinclair mentioned a letter that was sent to selectmen indicating that they should be supporting the efforts of the Housatonic Herbicide Working Group about spraying along the railroad. It will be sent out to all.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:04 p.m.

Recording Secretary,



Susan Francisco

Next regular meeting – February 13, 2024

<b>BLEC – Berkshire Litchfield Environmental Council</b>	<b>FRCC – Farmington River coordinating Committee</b>	<b>HRC – Housatonic River Commission</b>
<b>CCC – Citizens Coordinating Council</b>	<b>GE – General Electric</b>	<b>HVA – Housatonic Valley Association</b>
<b>CCT – Cornwall Conservation Trust</b>	<b>H.E.A.L. – Housatonic Environmental Action League</b>	<b>JKW – Japanese Knotweed</b>
<b>DEEP – Department of Energy and Environmental Protection</b>	<b>HMPA – Housatonic Meadows Preservation Action</b>	<b>NCD – Northwest Conservation District</b>
<b>DOT – Department of Transportation</b>	<b>HHWG – Housatonic Herbicide Working Group</b>	<b>NHCOG – Northwest Hills Council of Governments</b>
<b>EPA – Environmental Protection Agency</b>	<b>HMSP – Housatonic Meadows State Park</b>	<b>NPS – National Park Service</b>
<b>FERC - Federal Energy Regulatory Commission</b>		<b>RIO - River Information and Outreach</b>
		<b>W&amp;S – Wild and Scenic</b>
		<b>ZEO –Zoning Enforcement Officer</b>

[Housatonic River Commission - \(weebly.com\)](http://weebly.com)