Squannacook Greenways, Inc. - Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 1, 2026

(postponed from June 24, 2026)

Attendees

Directors	Joan Wotkowicz, Dan Hager, Emma Shepherd, Frank Murphy, Mark Cram, Dale Gates, Peter Cunningham, Bill Rideout
Guests	None

Notes

Meeting called to order at 7:18 PM

1. **Project Updates**

   a. **Groton Extension**

   Permitting & environmental analysis is going forward as planned. Received invoices from LEC (environmental consultant) and Dillis & Roy (engineer) for work performed on the Groton section.

   b. **Townsend Harbor**

   Covered under “Grants” section below.

   c. **Townsend Extension**

   Wooden Trestles

   McKenzie Engineering completed its evaluation of the Adams Dam and West Townsend railroad trestles, finding that both trestles are in reasonable shape and would only need surface-level work. McKenzie recommends removing the wooden debris that has gathered upstream of the support beams of both trestles to avoid possible damage.

   Board members discussed how to proceed with the debris removal recommendation. Bill will ask Colby Streeter (Townsend Conservation Agent) about options/proper procedure.

   Turnpike Road Extension

   Peter brought up the possibility of adding a separate section to our northern extension plans: the old road/railbed from Turnpike Road all the way up to the NH border, potentially interconnecting with the Mason Rail Trail. It may be good

to speak with the Mason ConCom about this. Peter recalls that Tim Maguire from Natural Heritage did not foresee any issues in this area.

2. **Events and Maintenance**

    a. **Event recap: Groton River Festival (6/14) and Townsend 250th Parade (6/20)**

    Groton River Festival
    Peter shared a table with Friends of Nashua River Rail Trail at the Groton River Festival. Pretty good day. The cardboard canoe race was a huge hoot.

    Townsend 250th Parade
    Bill reports that ~50 kids showed up at our bicycle decorating station. Moms and dads were excited that all the decorations were free. The kids had a great time and it was such a fun community event on a gorgeous day.

    Bill published photos of the event here:
    https://townsendhistoricalsociety.org/2026/06/21/townsend-celebrates-americas-250th-birthday/

    b. **Maintenance updates: Crosswinds signage, mowing, other?**

    Mowing
    Groton Highway Department agreed to mow in Groton the first week of July.

    Signage
    Mark replaced the broken signs on the existing posts. Mark notes that it will be nice to put in the permanent metal posts when we get a chance. Peter to check with the Groton Highway Department about this.

3. **Lunenburg Snow Riders (LSR)**

    Board members discussed next steps for LSR partnership. Emma forwarded the most recent email from LSR to Peter. It appears they may be waiting for us to reach out to plan a meeting.

4. **Grants**

    a. **MassTrails Grant**

    Bill provided board members with an update on our MassTrails grant contract and reimbursement status:

Problem: Due to an oversight on the MassTrails' end, Squannacook Greenways' contract had not been signed before our contractors began work. Therefore, $16,750 in expenses were incurred before the contract was "official." Amanda from MassTrails confirmed these expenses would now count as "matching funds" rather than reimbursement, meaning our expected $13,400 reimbursement for Bill's personal loan was lost.

Original funding plan: Squannacook Greenways had $4,300 cash, a $30,000 Groton CPA grant, and a $150,000 MassTrails grant (effectively $120,000 reimbursable with a 20% match requirement).

The winning bid was $132,000 total, including $39,750 of Groton-only work. The plan was to use $30,000 of Groton CPA funds toward the match and MassTrails funds for the remaining $102,000.

Financial consequence: Because only $9,650 more is needed to meet the required $26,400 match, the match is now largely coming from SG's own funds rather than the Groton CPA grant. This leaves the organization unable to repay Bill's $13,400 loan.

Proposed solution: Bill requested MassTrails backdate our contract to February 1, 2026, allowing us to proceed with the original funding plan and recover the $13,400 reimbursement needed to repay the loan.

In the board meeting, Peter suggested securing an earmark for $30-40k as a loan for upfront money for reimbursement grants to solve this problem in the future. Peter could reach out to Sen. Cronin and/or Rep. Scarsdale to request a meeting.

b. Wild & Scenic Community Grant w/ InLand

Shlomiya of InLand continues to work in partnership with SG and the Townsend Historical Society (THS) to develop an invasive species management plan for the Harbor Church area. She is also working on a community event tentatively scheduled for late August. Additionally, she applied for another grant related to environmental justice communities, for which SG provided a letter of support.

5. Financial and Fundraising Reports

Not presented.

6. Review June Meeting Minutes

Joan moved to approve the May minutes. Frank seconded. All voted in favor.

7. Schedule Next Meeting and Adjourn

Next meeting: Wednesday, August 19, 7 PM

Meeting adjourned 7:48 PM