

KYLE HANLON, Chair
SHEILA IRVIN, Vice-Chair
MARIE RAFTERY, Clerk
CHARLES P. OGDEN, Treasurer

NATHANIEL W. KARNs, A.I.C.P.
Executive Director

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday,

April 6, 2017

At the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Office
1 Fenn Street, Suite 201, Pittsfield, MA 01201

I. Call to Order

A. The meeting is called to order at: 4:00 p.m.

Chair Kyle Hanlon started the meeting by reading a statement regarding the open meeting law. BRPC records all meetings. Others may record the meeting after informing the chair. Any documents presented must be left with the chair of the meeting.

B. Roll Call:

Kyle Hanlon, Chair
Sheila Irvin, Vice Chair
Chuck Ogden, Treasurer
Rene Wood, Commission Development Chair
James Mullen, Environmental Committee Chair
John Duval, At Large
Roger Bolton, At Large

A quorum is present.

Others Present: Andy McKeever, iberkshire

Staff Present: Nat Karns, Executive Director
Tom Matuszko, Assistant Director
Marianne Sniezek, Office Manager

II. Approval of Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting of March 2, 2017

Jamie Mullen moved to approve with a correction; seconded by Rene Wood. Unanimously approved.

III. Environmental Review – SEIR for Hoosac Valley Rail Service (Adams)

Draft comments on the SEIR were provided to the Committee. Nat explained the comments are minor. The ADA comments appeared to be unanswered and BRPC commented on a solution for improving accessibility for the disabled.

Jamie reported there was not a need for an Environmental Review Committee meeting and he supported the comment letter.

Rene Wood moved to approve the comment letter on the SEIR for the Hoosac Valley Rail Service Extension in Adams; seconded by Roger Bolton. Unanimously approved.

IV. Financial Reports

A. March Expenditure Report

Everyone reviewed the completed expenditure list for March to April.

Jamie Mullen moved to approve the Expenditures as presented; seconded by Rene Wood. Unanimously approved

B. Accounts Receivable Report

Staff is continuing to follow up on aged receivables over 90 days. None of the aged receivables are at risk.

C. Other – None

V. Delegate and Alternate Issues – Rene discussed the area of dominant influence for television stations and the issue of Charter Spectrum withdrawing a Boston channel and offering a Springfield channel as an equivalent channel. MBI is putting money into Charter and she believes MBI should require that Charter provide a Boston channel because the money is state money. Rene suggested BRPC send a letter to our delegation. Sheila supports a letter stating Berkshire County should have cable access to at least some Boston news channels. Kyle was also in favor of the letter.

Rene Wood moved to have the Executive Director write a letter to MBI and our delegation since state money is involved it should be a requirement that at least one Boston news channel is available to all Berkshire County communities; seconded by Sheila Irvin. Unanimously approved.

VI. Committee Reports

A. Environmental Review Committee

Jamie informed all on the two following projects:

1. Cleveland Reservoir Diversion Maintenance Project – BRPC comments asking for monitoring of the wetland mitigation were picked up and are in the EEA Secretary's Certificate.
2. Mt. Washington East Street Culvert Repair – The Slip liner was approved. The committee did meet on this project and determined the Slip liner was the most cost effective repair.

After the discussion of culverts and the costs of repairs it seems the Regional Issues Committee is overwhelmed with topics to review. Rene suggested that maybe the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) or reinvigorating the Transportation Committee to look at transportation related issues. It was decided the Executive Committee will think about the idea and discuss at its next meeting.

B. Regional Issues Committee – Kyle reported the committee met to review Zoning Reform legislation.

Nat also reported the committee refined letters on an act to protect municipal authority to regulate private airfields and an act to extend ANR approval deadlines. Both letters will be presented to the Commission in May for approval.

C. Other – Finance Committee – Marianne reported the next meeting will be May 4, 2017 to recommend the agency budget.

VII. Items Requiring Action

A. Approval of Merit Increases for FY 2018

The Executive Committee was requested to approve the proposed Merit increases for FY2018.

FY 2018 based on performance ratings for the past year:

Exceptional -	5.5%
Exceeds Expectations -	4.5%
Meets Expectations -	3.5%
Needs Improvement -	2.5%
Unsatisfactory -	0%

It was clarified that the merit increases are the only pay increases staff receive as there is not separate cost of living or step plan increases, as is done in some municipal budgets.

Roger Bolton moved to approve the FY2018 Merit increases; seconded by Sheila Irvin. Unanimously approved.

B. Approval of Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace Policy

The Executive Committee was requested to approve an updated drug and alcohol free workplace policy as required by our federal funding agencies. We had a policy developed 20+ years ago and felt the need to update it. A copy of the proposed policy is attached.

After some discussion of the policy Rene Wood moved to approve the draft Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace Policy; seconded by Chuck Ogden. Unanimously approved.

C. Approval to Submit Grant Application to USDA for Farmers Market Promotion Program

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Services, Farmers Market Promotion Program to conduct the Berkshire Market Collective project. Through this project, BRPC would partner with Berkshire Farm & Table and Alchemy Initiative to address inefficiencies, build capacity and increase customer volume and sales in the 20 farmer's markets in the County. No BRPC match is required. Staff lead on this project is Brownfields Program Manager Melissa Provencher.

Rene Wood moved to approve the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the USDA for Farmers Market Promotion Program on behalf of the Commission; seconded by Chuck Ogden. Unanimously approved.

D. Approval to Submit Grant Application to EPA 2017 Healthy Communities Grant Program

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2017 Healthy Communities Grant Program to conduct the Healthy Communities, Healthy Homes, Healthy Families Project. This project would focus on sensitive populations (i.e., children, women of childbearing age, minorities, and seniors) to reduce the use of toxic chemicals in the home environment and reduce childhood exposure to harmful chemicals, asthma triggers, lead poisoning, etc. A 5% match is required which would be provided through in-kind services. Staff lead on this project is Brownfields Program Manager Melissa Provencher working with Public Health Program Manager Laura Kittross.

Rene Wood moved to approve the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the EPA 2017 Healthy Communities Grant Program on behalf of the Commission; seconded by Chuck Ogden. Unanimously approved.

E. Approval to Submit Grant Application to the Aetna Foundation, Cultivating Healthy Communities Grant Program

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application to Aetna Foundation, Cultivating Healthy Communities Grant Program. to conduct the Healthy Communities, Healthy Homes, Healthy Families Project. Similar to the application submitted to the EPA Healthy Communities Grant Program, this project would focus on sensitive populations (i.e., children, women of childbearing age, minorities, and seniors) to reduce the use of toxic chemicals in the home environment and reduce childhood exposure to harmful chemicals, asthma triggers, lead poisoning, etc. This project would substitute for the EPA application if the EPA application is unsuccessful or expand the reach of the work if the EPA application is successful. No BRPC match is required. Staff lead on this project is Brownfields Program Manager Melissa Provencher working with Public Health Program Manager Laura Kittross.

Chuck Ogden moved to approve the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the Aetna Foundation, Cultivating Healthy Communities Healthy Communities Grant Program on behalf of the Commission; seconded by Rene Wood. Unanimously approved.

F. Approval to Submit Grant Application to U.S. Department of Justice, FY 2017 Comprehensive School Safety Initiative

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the Department of Justice, Comprehensive School Safety Program. This grant would allow the Pittsfield public schools to expand the restorative justice/restorative practices program currently being piloted at Taconic High School to the remaining 11 schools in the district. BRPC would manage the program, arrange training/speakers and conduct research on the effectiveness of the program. There is no match requirement.

Roger Bolton moved to approve the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the U.S. Department of Justice, FY 2017 Comprehensive School Safety Initiative on behalf of the Commission; seconded by Rene Wood. Unanimously approved.

G. Approval to Submit Grant Application to Rita and Alex Hillman Foundation, Hillman Innovations in Nursing Grant Program

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the Alex and Rita Hillman Innovations in Nursing Grant Program. This grant would allow the Berkshire Public Health Alliance Public Health Nurses to conduct home assessment visits with elderly or other at risk populations. The nurses would suggest immediate changes, such as reducing falls hazards, ensuring up to date medication lists were available, etc., as well as, with permission, helping those who need further services to access those services. There is no match requirement.

Rene Wood moved to approve the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the Rita and Alex Hillman Foundation, Hillman Innovations in Nursing Grant Program on behalf of the Commission; seconded by Chuck Ogden. Unanimously approved.

H. Approval to Submit Grant Application to the Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council for Debris Management Outreach

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council for Debris Management Outreach. This is an expansion of the current debris management planning project. BRPC will create a training on debris management planning, and present that training

at least once in each of the four counties of Western Massachusetts. There is no match requirement. Nat explained this grant is about how to get rid of debris after a disaster such as downed trees from an ice storm.

Chuck Ogden moved to approve the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council for Debris Management Outreach on behalf of the Commission; seconded by Rene Wood. Unanimously approved.

I. Approval to Submit Grant Application to the Massachusetts Office of Information Technology (MassIT) for Support for Deploying MassGIS' FDC-Lite Application

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application to Massachusetts Office of Information Technology (MassIT) for Support for Deploying MassGIS' FDC-Lite Application. The FDC-Lite application allows local building inspectors to designate new addresses for the e911 system. BRPC will provide training and support for the application for the region. There is no match requirement. This grant is to allow new address locations to be added and connected to the 911 system.

Rene Wood moved to approve the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the Massachusetts Office of Information Technology (MassIT) for Support for Deploying MassGIS' FDC-Lite Application on behalf of the Commission; seconded by Chuck Ogden. Unanimously approved.

J. Other - None

VIII. Executive Director's Report

- A. Promotion of Jennifer Kimball to Senior Planner**
- B. Report on New Grants and Contracts**
- C. Update on Berkshire County Health Alliance**
- D. Western Massachusetts Historical Commission Coalition Meeting – Wednesday, April 5, 10 am-12pm, Lenox Town Hall**

Rene requested a copy of the letter approved by the Commission regarding code triggers related to ADA be sent to the western Massachusetts historical commissions for their reference.

- E. BRPC Comments on MassDOT 2018-2022 Capital Investment Plan**
- F. BRPC Comments on FY 2018 State Budget**
- G. Housatonic Rest of River Clean-up – Reply and Amicus Briefs Submitted by March 27th**
- H. Other**

IX. Old Business

- A. Further Discussion of Executive Director Replacement and Budgeting for Search**

As a follow-up to last month's discussion, we did some checking with other regions who recently went through Executive Director searches. Merrimack Valley (Lawrence) budgeted \$10,000 for a consultant; proposals came in on the order of \$15-20,000 but they were able to negotiate the contract by minimizing search tasks. Advertising only with professional planning/municipal related agencies cost around \$2,000.

SRPEDD (Brockton) went through two rounds of hiring. The first was attempted without using a consultant and was not successful. The 2nd round, using a consultant, included \$11,385 for the consultant, \$585 for advertising, finalist travel costs for interview \$511, and relocation costs for the successful applicant of \$6,924.

If we do a CORI and other background checks through the Employers Association, the cost will be \$100.

The cost for a search could be as high as \$20,000 and will be a line item in the budget. The expense will increase BRPC's overhead rate. Nat mentioned flyers could be produced in house to reduce cost.

Rene shared the process for a superintendent search in south county and the person who facilitated the process. The facilitator was very organized and stuck to the process and the needs of the district, skill set and experience. Rene will share the contact information with the search committee members. It would be interesting to have a conversation with this person.

Jamie wondered if she be available and a good a fit of us. At the last Executive meeting, the group decided the Search Committee would be exclusively commission members with outreach to others.

Kyle reported he has asked Sheila to be the chair of the Search Committee. Kyle and Sheila will be meeting first to set up a frame work of how many people are needed, who will be involved, basic questions, and basic categories. Once that is done then they can engage others.

Nat expressed there may be existing staff members interested in applying for the position. Kyle stated the Search Committee will determine if there will be an open search for internal and external applicants at the same time or not. Kyle asked all to share their ideas with him. Nat explained other RPA's have done both, promoted within and did not do a search. The results have been mixed as in some RPA's it worked well in others it was a disaster. Nat also is creating a list of his responsibilities for the Search Committee.

B. Report from MassMoves Workshop

There were approximately a dozen representatives from Berkshire County at Tuesday's Mass Moves workshop in Springfield. This workshop was conducted as part of the State Senate's annual Commonwealth Conversations tour which was held in the Pioneer Valley this year. About fifteen State Senators participated, many from western-central Mass but a few from the eastern part of the State. Chair Hanlon, Transportation Program Manager Clete Kus, and Senior Transportation Planner Emily Lindsey participated. Reports back indicate that there was heavy commentary about the lack of even reasonably adequate public transportation in the Berkshires.

Kyle reported he attended and all agreed the lack of public transportation in Berkshire County is an issue. At the meeting, there was a lot of data gathered via electronic polling. Kyle stated Clete was disappointed the focus was on services provided and not the importance of cost savings and streamlining of processes. There are nine meetings within the state.

C. Other - None

X. New Business

A. Development of Comments to Senators Warren and Markey and Congressman Neal Regarding Federal Budget Priorities for the Berkshires

At the March Commission meeting, we briefly discussed some of the possible program impacts of the federal budget discussions thus far on the programs which we rely upon. Subsequently, President Trump released his recommended budget. Should BRPC develop a letter to our U.S. Senators and Representative expressing our concerns over what has been released?

All agreed a letter should be sent with examples of the importance of the funding and the impacts to the region if funding is not received. Rene suggested adding the need for funds for infrastructure and transportation.

Rene Wood moved to send a letter; Jamie Mullen seconded. Unanimously approved.

B. May BRPC Meeting

At this point, we have four items for the May 18th Commission meeting:

- Adoption of FY 2018 BRPC Budget
- Consideration of letter on H.1083, an act to extend ANR approval deadlines
- Consideration of letter on S.1993, an act to protect municipal authority to regulate private airfields
- Commission Training Topic – Pittsfield’s Styrofoam – Plastic Bag Ban
- 2017 CEDS submit by the beginning of June. The CED’s report needs a Public Comment Period of 30 days. Nat asked if the Executive Committee could approve the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy at the June meeting.

XI. Adjournment

Jamie Mullen moved to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Sheila Irvin. The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Materials distributed or presented during this meeting:

Agenda

Minutes

Check Registers

Aged Receivables

Executive Director’s Memo

Technical Assistance Report

New Grants Received

Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace Policy

New Grants and Contracts Received 3/2/2017 to 4/6/2017

Meeting Notice for Western Massachusetts Historical Coalition

BRPC Comment Letter on MassDOT 2018-2022 Capital Investment Plan

BRPC Comment Letter on FY 2018 State Budget

Mass Freight Plan Open House

Draft comment letter SEIR Hoosac Valley Rail Service Extension

Berkshire Green Communities Green Network Flyer