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## MINUTES OF THE FULL COMMISSION MAY 21, 2020 MEETING

**Thursday, May 21, 2020**

**Virtual Meeting** as allowed by Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker's Executive Order dated March 12, 2020 suspending certain provision of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c.30 sec.20.

### I. Opening

#### A. The meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM

Chair Kyle Hanlon reminded all that per the open meeting law, BRPC records all meetings. Others may record the meeting after informing the chair. Any documents presented must be provided to the chair at the meeting. Kyle Hanlon also recorded the meeting.

#### B. Roll Call

The following Commission members were present:

John Duval – Adams Alternate  
Alvin Blake – Becket Alternate  
Peter Traub – Cheshire Delegate  
Ed Regendahl – Egremont Delegate  
Pedro Pachano - Gt. Barrington Delegate  
Malcolm Fick – Gt. Barrington Alternate  
Jim Sullivan – Hinsdale Delegate  
Buck Donovan – Lee Delegate  
Nancy Richard Marcus – Monterey Delegate  
Kyle Hanlon – North Adams Delegate  
Sheila Irvin – Pittsfield Delegate  
Rene Wood – Sheffield Alternate  
Amanda Hamilton – Tyringham Delegate  
Alex Carlisle – Williamstown Delegate  
Roger Bolton – Williamstown Alternate

Staff Present:

Thomas Matuszko – Executive Director  
Marianne Sniezek – Office Manager  
Clete Kus – Transportation Program Manager  
Anuja Koirala – Principal Planner Transportation  
Melissa Provencher – Environment and Energy Program Manager

Others Present: Jack Guerino – iberkshire Staff

### **C. Approval of Minutes of January 16, 2020 Meeting**

Sheila Irvin moved to approve; Jim Sullivan seconded. Approved with a roll call vote and two abstentions

Roll Call Vote:

Alvin Blake – Becket Alternate - Abstain  
Peter Traub – Cheshire Delegate - Yes  
Ed Regendahl – Egremont Delegate - Yes  
Pedro Pachano – Gt. Barrington Delegate - Yes  
Jim Sullivan – Hinsdale Delegate - Yes  
Buck Donovan – Lee Delegate - Yes  
Nancy Richard Marcus – Monterey Delegate - Yes  
Kyle Hanlon – North Adams Delegate - Yes  
Sheila Irvin – Pittsfield Delegate - Yes  
Rene Wood – Sheffield Alternate - Abstain  
Alex Carlisle – Williamstown Delegate - Yes

**II. Comments from the Public - None**

**III. Delegate & Alternate Issues - None**

**IV. Executive Committee Actions from February 6, March 5, April 2, May 7, 2020 meetings.**

There were no questions on the actions taken by the Executive Committee at their February 6, March 5, April 2, May 7, 2020 meetings.

**V. Proposed Transportation Improvement Program for FFY 2021-2025**

The updated Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Berkshires establishes which projects will receive the limited federal transportation funds in the region. It will go before the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization at its meeting on May 26, 2020. The Commission's discussion and decision will instruct the BRPC Chair on how to vote at the MPO meeting.

Anuja Koirala, Principal Planner, presented the detailed projects in the Revised Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Berkshires for each of the 5 years. Anuja explained the first year will not change but the next four years could change. Anuja informed all that more detailed documents are posted on BRPC website:

<http://berkshireplanning.org/initiatives/metropolitan-planning-organization-mpo>

Jim Sullivan made a motion for the Chair to endorse staff recommendations in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for FFY 2021-2025 at the next MPO meeting; Sheila Irvin seconded. Unanimously approved by a roll call vote.

Roll Call Vote:

John Duval – Adams Alternate - Yes  
Alvin Blake – Becket Alternate - Yes  
Peter Traub – Cheshire Delegate - Yes  
Ed Regendahl – Egremont Delegate - Yes  
Pedro Pachano – Gt. Barrington Delegate - Yes  
Jim Sullivan – Hinsdale Delegate - Yes  
Buck Donovan – Lee Delegate - Yes  
Nancy Richard Marcus – Monterey Delegate - Yes  
Kyle Hanlon – North Adams Delegate - Yes  
Sheila Irvin – Pittsfield Delegate - Yes  
Rene Wood – Sheffield Alternate - Yes  
Alex Carlisle – Williamstown Delegate - Yes

## **VI. Proposed Transportation Unified Planning Work Program for FFY 2021**

The proposed Unified Planning Work Program for FFY 2021, which establishes the transportation planning work BRPC staff will be involved in for the coming year, was presented. The Commission's discussion and input will instruct the BRPC Chair for the MPO meeting.

Clete Kus, Transportation Program Manager, explained the UPWP is an annual document for work activities from Oct 1 to Sept 30th. The total budget for the FFY 2021 is \$628,859 for various activities; Management & Certification including Public Outreach, Technical Support for GIS Mapping & Graphics, Regional Data & Analysis, Traffic and Travel Data, Travel Forecasting & Green House Gas Emissions, Pavement Management, Planning Studies for Special Studies, Bicycle & Pedestrian Planning, Culvert Assessments, Regional Transit Planning for BRTA, Safety Initiatives, Climate Change, Passenger & Freight Rail along with Performance Measures and Berkshire Flyer Marketing and Implementation. Additional activities for Transportation and Land Use Planning, Local Technical Assistance, Scenic Byway Projects, Expansion of Transit and Rail Service and Outreach and Integration Coordination. Clete explained the two new activities added for this federal fiscal year will be culvert assessments and the expansion of transit and rail services. Clete also reported BRPC has two BRPC staff who have completed culvert assessments training.

Clete explained the Transportation Unified Planning Work (UPWP) will be released for a 21-day comment period.

Rene Wood made a motion for the Chair to endorse staff recommendations with comments incorporated in the Transportation Unified Planning Work (UPWP) for FFY 2021 Program at the next MPO meeting; Sheila Irvin seconded. Unanimously Approved by a roll call vote.

Roll Call Vote:

Alvin Blake – Becket Alternate - Yes  
Peter Traub – Cheshire Delegate - Yes  
Ed Regendahl – Egremont Delegate - Yes  
Pedro Pachano – Gt. Barrington Delegate - Yes  
Jim Sullivan – Hinsdale Delegate - Yes  
Buck Donovan – Lee Delegate - Yes  
Nancy Richard Marcus – Monterey Delegate - Yes  
Kyle Hanlon – North Adams Delegate - Yes  
Sheila Irvin – Pittsfield Delegate - Yes  
Rene Wood – Sheffield Alternate – Yes  
Amanda Hamilton – Tyringham Delegate - Yes  
Alex Carlisle – Williamstown Delegate - Yes

## **VII. Comments of Proposed Changes to the Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART) Program Regulations**

Recently changes have been proposed to the SMART Program Regulations which govern solar development. Attached were draft comments. The BRPC Regional Issues Committee met on May 20<sup>th</sup> to prepare comments. These comments were reviewed by Melissa Provencher at the meeting.

Rene Wood moved to approve the Comment letter from the Regional Issues Committee of Proposed Changes to the Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART), Sheila Irvin seconded. Unanimously approved by a roll call vote.

Roll Call Vote:

John Duval – Adams Alternate - Yes  
Alvin Blake – Becket Alternate - Yes  
Peter Traub – Cheshire Delegate - Yes  
Ed Regendahl – Egremont Delegate - Yes  
Pedro Pachano – Gt. Barrington Delegate - Yes  
Jim Sullivan – Hinsdale Delegate - Yes  
Buck Donovan – Lee Delegate - Yes  
Nancy Richard Marcus – Monterey Delegate - Yes  
Kyle Hanlon – North Adams Delegate - Yes  
Sheila Irvin – Pittsfield Delegate - Yes

Rene Wood – Sheffield Alternate - Yes  
Alex Carlisle – Williamstown Delegate - Yes

**VIII. Reconsideration of FY 21 Assessment Increase**

In January, the Commission voted to increase the community assessment for FY 2021 by 2.5%. Since January and in response to the COVID-19 crisis, the fiscal outlook of the region’s municipalities for FY21 has changed significantly. At its May 7, 2020 meeting, the BRPC Executive Committee discussed and voted to recommend rescinding the 2.5% increase for FY 2021. However, this action must be taken by the Full Commission.

Rene Wood moved to set the FY21 assessment the same as FY20 with no increase for the FY21 assessments, keeping the assessments at \$104,551.32 for FY21, Nancy Marcus seconded. Unanimously approved with a roll call vote.

Roll Call Vote:

John Duval – Adams Alternate - Yes  
Alvin Blake – Becket Alternate - Yes  
Peter Traub – Cheshire Delegate - Yes  
Ed Regendahl – Egremont Delegate - Yes  
Pedro Pachano – Gt. Barrington Delegate - Yes  
Jim Sullivan – Hinsdale Delegate - Yes  
Buck Donovan – Lee Delegate - Yes  
Nancy Richard Marcus – Monterey Delegate - Yes  
Kyle Hanlon – North Adams Delegate - Yes  
Sheila Irvin – Pittsfield Delegate - Yes  
Rene Wood – Sheffield Alternate - Yes  
Amanda Hamilton – Tyringham Delegate – Yes  
Alex Carlisle – Williamstown Delegate – Yes

**IX. Adoption of the BRPC FY 2021 Budget**

In accordance with the BRPC bylaws BRPC must adopt an annual budget for the coming fiscal year.

Malcolm Fick, Treasurer reported the Finance Committee reviewed and recommends the BRPC FY2021 Budget. Tom highlighted the key items for revenue and expenses. Revenue is higher than last year due to new grants for Education, Climate Change and Public Health. If BRPC receives more grants it would have to hire staff.

Jim Sullivan moved to approve the BRPC FY 2021 Budget; Pedro Pachano seconded. Unanimously approved.

Roll Call Vote:

John Duval – Adams Alternate - Yes  
Alvin Blake – Becket Alternate - Yes  
Peter Traub – Cheshire Delegate - Yes  
Ed Regendahl – Egremont Delegate - Yes  
Pedro Pachano – Gt. Barrington Delegate - Yes  
Jim Sullivan – Hinsdale Delegate - Yes  
Buck Donovan – Lee Delegate - Yes  
Nancy Richard Marcus – Monterey Delegate - Yes  
Kyle Hanlon – North Adams Delegate - Yes  
Sheila Irvin – Pittsfield Delegate - Yes  
Rene Wood – Sheffield Alternate - Yes  
Amanda Hamilton – Tyringham Delegate – Yes  
Alex Carlisle – Williamstown Delegate - Yes

**X. Report of the BRPC Nominating Committee – Officers for FY 2021**

Rene reported the Nominating Committee has a preliminary Slate of Officers for the upcoming fiscal year. The Commission will vote after July 1st on the preliminary Slate of Officers and any nominations from the floor for FY21 will be accepted.

KYLE HANLON, Chair  
JOHN DUVAL, Vice Chair  
SHEILA IRVIN, Clerk  
MALCOLM FICK, Treasurer

**XI. Roundtable Discussion – Trials, Tribulations and Successes of Planning Efforts within the COVID-19 Crisis**

Delegates and Alternates were asked to share their experiences in trying to carry-on various planning effects during the COVID-19 crisis.

There was a discussion on changing zoning for outdoor dining to allow for more flexibility. Sheila reported Pittsfield is looking into larger areas for outdoor dining and curbside pickup by using public space. Jim Sullivan mentioned changing bylaws and then changing them back could be an issue and maybe we should wait to see what happens with the virus. Roger pointed out the zoning changes could be temporary. Malcolm added that he felt zoning changes could help restaurants and businesses cope with social distancing requirements. Kyle commented that changing bylaws will help businesses get through the challenges and get businesses more revenue. Pedro talked about short term policies to allow streets to be shut down to vehicles to create open markets and easier access for customers. John added if communities can find ways to change zoning to allow people to visit

business while maintaining social distancing will help consumer confidence. John stressed the importance that people need to be confident to go out and support local businesses.

## **XII. Executive Director's Report**

### **A. BRPC COVID-19 Update**

The BRPC office is still officially closed. Based on Governor Baker's Phase 1 announcement today, it appears the soonest we may be able to get back into the office in a limited manner is next week. We are working on preparing a required reopening plan. It is likely there will not be any in-person meetings in the office for at least several weeks. Staff activities have focused on the public health response and, more recently, recovery. Staff are preparing grant applications for technical assistance to small businesses as well as business support funding for micro-businesses for low to moderate income business owners.

### **B. Transportation and Climate Initiative**

The schedule for the Transportation and Climate Initiative has been pushed back in response to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the revised schedule, a final Memorandum of Understanding is now expected in the fall of 2020, at which point, each jurisdiction (state) will decide whether to sign the MOU and participate in the regional program. The timing for signing the MOU has shifted to the fall but work on the program details continues and engagement with stakeholders will continue to inform the process. Over the next several months, TCI jurisdictions together will be working on:

- Identifying investments, initiatives, and complementary policies that will further reduce pollution, benefit public health, create jobs, and accelerate economic recovery in the wake of the pandemic.
- Economic and public health modeling to analyze how emissions reductions and investments in low-carbon transportation infrastructure will benefit people, businesses, and communities, particularly communities already bearing disproportionate impacts from pollution and lack of access to economic opportunities.

### **C. CPTC Online Training**

CPTC (Citizen Planner Training Collaborative) <https://masscptc.org/training/online/online-index.html#prerecorded> is offering online training. Pre-recorded trainings can be viewed at any

time and provide links to printed information that can be bookmarked.

Pre-recorded trainings include:

- Introduction to Subdivision Control & ANR
- Special Permit & Variances
- Writing Reasonable & Defensible Decisions

Another workshop, Roles & Responsibilities of Planning Boards and Boards of Appeals will be broadcast at a later date.

CPTC online workshops are free of charge but participants must register to access them and receive credit. Go to [CPTC Participant Portal](#) and select the register button. New users will have to set up a new account. Previous users will need log in to their account and select "Online".

#### **D. MassWorks Applications**

The RFR and application for the MassWorks 2020 Round is being finalized.

It is expected it will be advertised soon, within a couple of weeks.

Applications will be due by the end of August with decisions due later in the Fall.

#### **E. Housing Choice**

The decisions about Housing Choice designations are expected in June, as is the application round for the Small-Town Grant Program.

#### **F. Summer Schedule**

Full Commission meetings are normally every 2 months and regularly scheduled from September through May. However, in the summer months a more flexible schedule is followed. BRPC's bylaws require us to hold a meeting to vote in new officers before August 31<sup>st</sup>. Please be on the lookout for the date of the summer meeting.

**G. Other** – Rene reported at the Commission Development Meeting there was a discussion regarding Educational Webinars. The webinars could be for Planners, Select boards and Administrators. Some ideas at the meeting were parking options, temporary zoning related to Covid-19, and State Budget Shortfalls and How do communities deal with the shortfalls. Any other ideas should be sent to Tom Matuszko at [tmatuszko@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:tmatuszko@berkshireplanning.org).

Tom reported on Friday's 1Berkshire has webinars on the Economy.



### **XIII. Adjournment**

Jim Sullivan made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Pedro Pachano. Unanimously approved. Adjourned at 8:23 pm.

#### **- Materials distributed or presented during this meeting:**

Meeting Agenda

Draft Meeting Minutes January 16, 2020

Executive Committee Actions Memo

Proposed Transportation Improvement Program FFY 2020-2025

Proposed Transportation Unified Planning Work Program FFY2021

Draft Comment Letter Proposed Changes to the SMART

Draft Comment Letter Proposed Changes to the SMART- Revised

Proposed FY 2021 Budget Memo

Projected FY 2021 Revenues

Projected FY 2021 Expenditures