



BRPC

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

1 Fenn Street, Suite 201
Pittsfield, MA 01201
T: (413) 442-1521 · F: (413) 442-1523
TTY: 771 or (800) 439-2370
berkshireplanning.org

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES APPROVED

Thursday, October 7, 2021

Virtual Meeting as allowed by Ch. 20 of the Acts of 2021 suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c.30 sec.20.

I. Call to Order & Open Meeting Law Statement

A. The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m.

Chair John Duval called the meeting to order and stated 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:

Read by Office Manager Marianne Sniezek:

John Duval, Chair, Adams Alternate

Malcolm Fick, Vice Chair, Great Barrington Alternate

Sheila Irvin, Clerk, Pittsfield Delegate

René Wood, Commission Development Chair, Sheffield Alternate

Roger Bolton, Environmental Review Committee Chair, Williamstown

Alternate – 4:26 p.m. arrival

CJ Hoss, Regional Issues Committee Chair, Pittsfield Alternate

Kyle Hanlon, North Adams Delegate, At-Large

Sam Haupt, Peru Delegate; At-Large

Others Present: Christine Rasmussen Stockbridge Alternate; Al Blake Becket Alternate; Barbara Davis-Hassan Lanesborough Delegate; Tom Hutcheson, Dalton Town Manager; Brittany Polito, iBerkshires; Molly (no additional information)

Staff Present: Thomas Matuszko, Executive Director; Marianne Sniezek, Office Manager; Kate Hill Tapia, Office Administrator

C. Approval of Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting on September 2, 2021

Sheila Irvin moved to approve the minutes of the September 2, 2021 meeting with corrections suggested by René Wood. The motion was seconded by Kyle Hanlon and approved by roll call vote from John Duval, CJ Hoss, Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, René Wood, Sam Haupt, and Kyle Hanlon.

II. Financial Reports

A. September Expenditures Report

René Wood moved to approve the September Expenditures report, and Sam Haupt seconded the motion. The report was approved by roll call vote from

John Duval, CJ Hoss, Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, René Wood, Sam Haupt, and Kyle Hanlon.

B. Accounts Receivable Report & Assessments

Committee members noted receivables increased for September. It was suggested that contracts could be changed to read "services payable in advance" as most towns receive funding well before BRPC finishes the work. Executive Director Tom Matuszko explained the following:

- Lanesborough's FY21 stormwater project payment was delayed by the transition to a new town manager. Payment needs approval at a special town meeting in December. Barb Davis-Hassan will follow up to ensure it is on the warrant.
- Public Health invoices are problematic in that they are usually paid quarterly, which delays payments. Solutions are being considered.
- The Stockbridge invoice is related to the delivery of a final report pending edits. Christine Rasmussen noted that a new Accountant started in July, so there may have been communication mishaps. She will follow up to ensure payment.

C. Line of Credit Report

There has been no need to tap the line of credit.

D. Other - Powerhouse Square Brownfields Loan

Tom Matuszko reported that BRPC is optimistic about repayment and following up with Powerhouse Square about the Brownfields loan. Per the recommendation of BRPC's attorney, BRPC sent a letter asking for information on sales of units. There has been no response.

III. Delegate & Alternate Issues

There were no Delegate & Alternate issues.

IV. Items Requiring Action - None

V. Committee Reports

A. Regional Issues Committee

The Regional Issues Committee met on September 22, 2021. The main agenda items were the State Auditor's report on municipal infrastructure and the PILOT Program (State-Owned Land Payments in Lieu of Taxes). The committee is drafting a support letter for PILOT. Unapproved draft minutes were attached to the meeting material that was distributed.

Tom said that Dr. Ben Tafoya from the State Auditor's office gave a great presentation on the report: *Public Infrastructure in Western Massachusetts: A Critical Need for Regional Investment and Revitalization*. Dr. Tafoya will present at tomorrow's Rural Policy Advisory Committee Meeting and again at the Regional Issues Committee meeting Wednesday, October 27 @ 4:00

p.m. The Zoom link is posted via BRPC's events calendar and the Agendas & Minutes page.

B. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee

The CEDS committee met on September 29, 2021. Draft unapproved minutes were not yet available for distribution. The main agenda items were reviewing the EDA CARES Act award activities, adding eight priority projects and removing two projects, and conditional approval of the CEDS 2021 Annual Report.

Also discussed was the potential to participate in a statewide application, with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) taking the lead in the Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Build Back Better grant program.

C. Other - None

VI. Executive Director's Report

A. Report on New Contracts/Agreements

New Grants and Contracts received/initiated 07/01/2021 to 08/31/2021

- Berkshire Housing Development Corporation and Housing Services Inc. - Public Health Nursing Services FY22 - \$2,400
- Florida - Public Health Nursing Services FY22 - \$2,100
- New Ashford - Public Health Nursing Services FY22 \$2,625
- Savoy - Procurement Services - \$2,100
- DPH - COVID-19 Case Investigation and Contact Tracing Program \$500,000
- Mass Clean Energy Center - Act4All Planning (Clean Transportation) - \$7,500
- Great Barrington - Brownfields Clean Up - \$33,600
- MassDOT - Coordinated Transportation Planning - \$615,143
- Berkshire County Sheriff's Office - Opioid Abuse Prevention - \$25,000
- Lenox - Municipal Vulnerability Plan - \$295,190

Grants and Contracts not received.

- None

B. Berkshires Tomorrow Inc. (BTI) Update

The board met on September 2, 2021, and approved FY22 Officers and Directors, the budget of \$61,814 (which was attached to the meeting material), and other yearly administrative items. Tom Matuszko explained that the budget would be lower in FY22 since Berkshire Community College will be the fiscal agent for the Berkshire County Education Task Force (BCETF). The bulk of BTI's grants were for BCETF.

C. Staff Update

- Andrea Goodman was hired as a part-time Project Specialist (contact

tracing for the Public Health Program. (Letter of qualifications was attached with the meeting material.)

- Heather Descoteau was hired as a part-time Public Health Nurse. (Resume was attached with the meeting material.)
- Colin Sykes was hired as a full-time Berkshire Public Alliance Inspector (Resume was attached with the meeting material.)

D. Rural Policy Advisory Commission Update

The Rural Policy Advisory Commission did not meet in September. The next meeting is on October 8, 2021. Executive Director Tom Matuszko noted that the State Auditor's municipal infrastructure report is very important. It verifies that western Massachusetts has been at the "short end" of state funding streams. This affects roadways, culverts, bridges, municipal buildings like town halls, police stations, public works buildings, and broadband internet. State Auditor Bump recommends using ARPA funds to invest in western Mass. Tom is organizing support for the proposal, including the Berkshire legislative delegation, town managers, 1Berkshires and the business community, select board members, DPW leaders, police, and the other regional planning commissions. Input needs to be provided very quickly as the legislature will make final decisions about ARPA funding soon.

Meeting participants discussed the importance of supporting PILOT and how towns don't have grant writers to go after funds, so equity in funding needs to include grant writing services. Meeting participants noted that Representative Barrett is the Vice Chair of the ARPA committee. A hopeful sign is that the Chapter 90 formula may be based on town road miles vs. population. The Berkshires will likely lose a state representative due to redistricting. Organizations like BRPC need to advocate for the region.

E. CPTC Fall Training Schedule

Citizen Planner Training Collaborative (CPTC) trainings will start in early November and run through early January. The sessions will be virtual again this year; hence the full range of trainings will be available to everyone.

F. BRPC Annual Report

A copy of the FY 2021 Annual Report was in the meeting materials.

G. State Auditor's Report on Infrastructure Spending in Western Mass

The State Auditor has released a study on the need for infrastructure investment in Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden, and Hampshire Counties of Western Massachusetts. This report focused on roadways, bridges, culverts, municipal buildings, and high-speed internet. It was available on the Auditors' webpage, [Office of the State Auditor | Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/office-of-the-state-auditor). Discussion about this topic was reported in the Regional Issues Committee report above.

H. Build Back Better Grant Program

This very competitive EDA grant program has the potential to provide \$25-\$100 million for "game-changing activities" in "industry clusters." BRPC is

collaborating with City of Pittsfield, MCLA, BCC, planning organizations across the state, and others to address cyber security. Phase I of the application, to fund the planning of Phase 2, is due October 19. The proposal is to create an education and training pipeline to ensure that businesses have access to specific cyber security measures.

VII. Old Business

A. Office Space Update

BRPC received plans and a draft lease for office space. The prior tenant left on September 30. Unfortunately, work won't be completed by December 1. It will be inconvenient as new staff comes on board and space is limited.

B. Other

VIII. New Business

A. November Commission Meeting

Potential topics for the November Commission meeting are below. The CEDS annual report will need to be approved.

- A presentation on the Berkshire County Electric Vehicle Charging Station Plan
- A presentation about the State Auditors report about infrastructure funding in Western Mass could be repeated due to its importance (this will happen at the October Regional Issues Committee meeting).
- A possible MEPA comment letter

B. Other

IX. Adjournment

Kyle Hanlon motioned to adjourn the meeting at 4:42 p.m., seconded by René Wood and unanimously approved.

Attachments:

- Unapproved Minutes of the September 2, 2021 Executive Committee Meeting
- September Expenditures Report
- September Receivables Report
- September Line of Credit Report
- Memo – October 7, 2021 Executive Committee Agenda Items
- Draft Unapproved Minutes of the September 9, 2021 Regional Issue Committee meeting
- Berkshires Tomorrow FY22 Budget
- Resume – Andrea Goodman
- Resume – Heather Descoteau
- Resume – Colin Sykes
- BRPC Annual Report
- Memo – August 2021 Technical Assistance