



# BRPC

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

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## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Thursday, May 12, 2022

Virtual Meeting as allowed by Ch. 22 of the Acts of 2022 suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c.30 sec.20 until July 15, 2022.

### I. Call to Order & Open Meeting Law Statement

#### A. The meeting was called to order at 4:02 pm.

Chair John Duval called the virtual meeting to order and stated that 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 Administrator Kate Hill Tapia:

John Duval, Chair, Adams Alternate

Malcolm Fick, Vice Chair, Great Barrington Alternate

Sheila Irvin, Clerk, Pittsfield Delegate

Buck Donovan, Treasurer, Lee Delegate

CJ Hoss, Regional Issues Committee Chair, Pittsfield Alternate

Roger Bolton, Environmental Review Committee Chair, Williamstown Alternate

Kyle Hanlon, At-large, North Adams Delegate

Sam Haupt, At-large, Peru Delegate (4:05)

Others Present: Brittany Polito, iBerkshires; Christine Rasmussen, Stockbridge Alternate (late)

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

### II. Approval Executive Committee Meeting April 7, 2022 Minutes

CJ Hoss moved to approve the minutes of the April 7, 2022 meeting. The motion was seconded by Malcolm Fick and approved by a roll call vote from John Duval, Malcolm Fick, CJ Hoss, and Roger Bolton, with abstentions from Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, and Kyle Hanlon.

### III. Financial Reports

#### A. April Expenditures Report

There were no questions.

The report was approved by a roll vote from John Duval, Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, CJ Hoss, Roger Bolton, and Kyle Hanlon.

#### B. Accounts Receivable Report & Assessments

Malcolm pointed out that line 631 DAL/CDBG looks incorrect since the over 90 days (\$82,872) is higher than the amount due (\$81,032). Staff will

investigate and correct that.

**C. Line of Credit Report**

No activity. Cash flow is good.

**D. Other** (For information only) – none.

**IV. Delegate & Alternate Issues** - none

**V. Items Requiring Action**

**A. Approval to Amend the Salary and Performance Review Policy**

Approval was requested to amend the Salary and Performance Review Policy to formalize a 6-month performance review of newly hired employees and enable a salary adjustment should that employee perform at a higher level than initially anticipated. With merit-based salary increases, an employee's salary builds on the previous year's salary. When newly hired employees start at the low end of the salary range, increasing their pay commensurate with their work performance is difficult. This change would allow an adjustment and help BRPC retain good employees.

CJ Hoss motioned to amend the Salary and Performance Review Policy (effective April 1, 2022) to formalize a 6-month performance review of newly hired employees and enable a salary adjustment should that employee perform at a higher level than initially anticipated. Malcolm Fick seconded it. It was approved by a roll call vote from John Duval, Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, CJ Hoss, Roger Bolton, Kyle Hanlon, and Sam Haupt.

**B. Approval to Submit Grant Applications to the Planning Assistance Program with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs**

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the Executive Director to submit several grant applications to the MA Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs – FY23 Planning Assistance Grant Program. Possible applications include:

**Lanesborough – Master Plan**

To assist the Town of Lanesborough to develop a Master Plan. The staff lead is Executive Director Tom Matuszko, [tmatuszko@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:tmatuszko@berkshireplanning.org).

**Regional – Municipal Best Practices for Energy Self-Sufficiency**

To develop municipal best practices for energy self-sufficiency. BRPC would work with participating communities to identify potential barriers and planning tools related to electric vehicles, battery storage, and solar development. A required match of 25% of the total grant would be provided through the DLTA program. The staff lead is Environmental & Energy Program Manager Melissa Provencher, [mprovencher@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:mprovencher@berkshireplanning.org).

## **Sheffield – Implementation of Housing Production Plan**

To assist the Town of Sheffield in implementing recommendations made in the FY22 Town of Sheffield Housing Production Plan. Technical assistance would include research and identification of housing development models and drafting of new zoning by-laws, as well as amendments to existing zoning, to enable a diverse range of housing to be built within the Town. The application will request up to \$50,000. A required match of 25% of the total grant, up to \$12,500 would be provided through the DLTA program. Staff contact is Housing and Community Development Program Manager, Patricia Mullins, pmullins@berkshireplanning.org.

Kyle Hanlon moved to authorize the Executive Director to submit several grant applications to the MA Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs – FY23 Planning Assistance Grant Program. Possible projects to include the Sheffield Housing Production Plan, developing municipal best practices for energy self-sufficiency, and a master plan for Lanesborough. Malcolm Fick seconded the motion. It was approved by a roll call vote from John Duval, Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, CJ Hoss, Roger Bolton, Kyle Hanlon, and Sam Haupt.

### **C. Other** – for information only

## **VI. Committee Reports**

### **A. Commission Development Committee**

The Commission Development Committee met on April 12, 2022. The main meeting agenda was to form a Nominating Committee to recommend FY2023 Officers to the Commission on May 19, 2022. Draft unapproved meeting minutes were in the meeting materials.

### **B. Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)**

The Transportation Advisory Committee met on April 19, 2022. Sam Haupt reported that the draft 2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) was approved for release and public comment. Draft unapproved meeting minutes were in the meeting materials.

### **C. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee (CEDS)**

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee met on April 20, 2022. The main meeting topics were reports on the work being conducted through the CARES Act funding, including Benchmarks and resiliency planning. Draft unapproved meeting minutes were included in the meeting material.

### **D. Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)**

The MPO met on April 26, 2022. The main topics were a vote to approve the 2nd amendment to the 2022-2026 TIP, a vote to approve an Administrative Adjustment to the FFY 2022-2026 TIP related to the cost increase of the Brayton Elementary School Improvements, and a vote to submit a 3rd amendment to the 2022-2026 TIP to address changes to include

programming leftover funding toward a new project in Great Barrington, resurfacing and related work on Route 23/183, a cost increase for Pittsfield superstructure replacement at Holmes Road over Housatonic Railroad, and to move the Lanesborough resurfacing and related work on Route 7 2022 to 2023, and a vote to initiate a 21-day public comment period for the draft FFY 2023-2027 TIP. John Duval reported that Clete Kus reviewed the UPWP document. Draft unapproved meeting minutes were included in the meeting material.

**E. Regional Issues Committee**

The Regional Issues Committee met on April 27, 2022. The main topics were a report from a representative of ISO New England on the electric grid and a discussion about allowing continued remote participation in public meetings. Draft unapproved meeting minutes were included in the meeting materials.

**F. Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee met on May 5, 2022. The main topics were the proposed FY23 budget, approval to eliminate the need for dual signatures on a small number of regular checks, a report on our OPEB Trust balance, and a report on e-treasury. The budget will be presented to the full Commission for approval. Draft unapproved minutes were in the meeting materials.

**G. Environmental Review Committee**

There was not a meeting, but Robert Bolton reported that he and BRPC staff reviewed the ENF and did a virtual site visit for the Sheffield small bridge project and saw no need to provide comments on the ENF.

**VII. Executive Director's Report**

**A. Report on New Contracts/Agreements**

New Grants and Contracts received/initiated from 4/01/2022 to 4/30/2022

- Berkshire Gas & National Grid – Mass Save Community First Partnership- \$75,000; this is a new funding source on energy issues
- Mass Office of Travel and Tourism - Berkshire County Collaborative Campaign - \$140,000
- BTI – Milltown Outdoor Recreation Planning - \$19,600
- Becket – Open Space and Recreation Plan - \$15,000
- Egremont Pavement Management - \$5,350

Grants and Contracts not received.

- BRPC is not aware of any grants and contracts not received.

**B. Berkshires Tomorrow Inc. (BTI) Update**

The BTI Board approved Berkshires Tomorrow to enter into a \$20,000 agreement with the Milltown Operating Foundation, dba Milltown Capital, to continue implementation efforts related to the Berkshire County Outdoor Recreation Plan.

### C. Staff Updates

- The new position for Human Resources Payroll Assistant position is posted.
- Meg Arvin starts at the end of May as a Public Health Planner. She will support the Berkshire Overdose Addiction Prevention Collaborative (BOAPC) and its associated substance use disorder projects, with an emphasis on youth and child-focused projects. Her resume was attached.
- The following staff have given notice and will leave by the end of May.
  - o Erin Jones, Public Health Planner
  - o Morgan Ovitsky, Public Health Project Specialist
- The following are Summer 2022 interns and their projects. \* BRPC employees

Ajay Chatha	clean energy & stormwater	Williams College
Brian Lavionio	clean energy	Williams College
*Dillan Patel	stormwater mapping	Rutgers
*Emma Doane	community planning	Clark University
*Matt O'Sullivan	stormwater mapping	Umass Amherst
*Robin Fordham	historic preservation planning	Amherst resident
Sabrine Brismeur	outdoor recreation	Williams College
MassHire	urban planning - communications	TBD

### D. Rural Policy Advisory Commission (RPAC) Update

The Rural Policy Advisory Commission met on April 8, 2022. The main agenda topics were planning to meet with gubernatorial candidates, discuss rural ARPA priorities and advocacy, and a review and discussion on the first draft compilation of regulations, laws, and policies that may be especially burdensome to rural municipalities.

### E. Census Release Date

BRPC recently learned that the census announced that the 2020 Census detailed results (age breakdowns and housing characteristics) will now be released starting in May 2023, much later than they anticipated (summer 2022). Additional data will be released later in 2023.

### F. MassDOT Long Range Transportation Plan

MassDOT is undergoing a statewide long-range transportation planning process dubbed "Beyond Mobility" that will guide the work of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) through 2050. It will establish the vision, strategy, and goals for the future of transportation in Massachusetts and document the most important transportation priorities and values among all Massachusetts residents. A public survey is open, [Beyond Mobility Vision for Transportation Survey \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com/survey123). Responding to this survey would be a great way to inform MassDOT about the unique transportation needs of Berkshire County, especially the importance of passenger rail.

## **G. State and Federal Grant Sessions**

Working with the area's legislators, the three western Regional Planning Agencies (RPAs) have held two great well attended grant sessions – One Stop for Growth grants and federal transportation funds. Session recordings and materials are at [www.berkshireplanning.org](http://www.berkshireplanning.org), [www.frcog.org](http://www.frcog.org), and [www.pvpc.org](http://www.pvpc.org).

Register at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUtd--spzoqHtW1GeGR6z0iyrmhqzIQCNSO>

BRPC is redesigning the website to make grant funding sources more readily available. The challenge will be to keep it up to date.

## **H. Other** (For information only)

## **VI. Old Business**

### **A. Office Space**

BRPC is mostly settled into the new offices. There are still a few "punch list" items left. Work on re-pointing the bricks on the exterior of the building did not happen in April as planned but will take place over the next few weeks.

### **B. Annual Meeting**

The Commission Development Committee recommends the Annual meeting be held on Thursday, September 29, 2022, as an in-person event, assuming it could be cancelled without a monetary. It would be a joint meeting with the Berkshire County Selectmen's Association. The Committee also recommends the September Commission meeting be held before the Annual Dinner/Meeting. The Pittsfield Country Club price is at least \$64 per person.

The Executive Committee voted to direct staff to explore more options such as Berkshire Community College and the Holiday Inn with a budget of \$4,000 – \$6,000 from the general fund to ensure complimentary tickets for staff and guests and underwriting the cost for other attendees. Keeping the ticket cost to \$25 was recommended.

Sam Haupt made the motion, CJ Hoss seconded, and it was approved by a roll call vote from John Duval, Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, CJ Hoss, Roger Bolton, and Sam Haupt.

### **C. Other** (For information only) - none

## **VII. New Business**

### **A. FY 23 BRPC Agency Budget**

The Commission needs to approve the FY 23, July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023, budget at the May 19th meeting. The budget recommended by the Finance Committee was in the meeting materials with an explanatory memo.

DLTA funding is still uncertain as the House Ways & Means Committee has it in their version of the state budget, but the Senate does not.

## **B. May Commission Meeting**

The following agenda items were confirmed:

- Approval of Agency FY2023 Budget
- Report of the Nominating Committee
- Transportation Documents (TIP, UPWP)
- Berkshire Housing Development Corporation presentation
- Presentation by BRTA Administrator Bob Malnati

It was decided to hold off on these topics:

- Greylock Glen -At a recent CEDS meeting, there was an informative presentation about Greylock Glen. The town recently received funding for infrastructure improvements, making this project more likely to occur sooner than later.
- Berkshire Benchmark Presentation

## **C. EPA Brownfields Award**

Tom reported that BRPC received EPA funding for brownfields assessments and the revolving loan fund. Some current projects include Greylock Works, North Adams; Reid Cleaners, Great Barrington; and another in Adams.

## **C. Adjournment**

Sheila Irvin motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:04 pm, seconded by Sam Haupt, and unanimously approved.

Attachments:

- Unapproved Minutes of April 7, 2022, Executive Committee Meeting
- April Expenditures Reports
- April Receivables Report
- April Line of Credit Report
- Salary and Performance Review Policy – Proposed Amendments 05.12.22
- Draft Unapproved Minutes of April 12, 2022, Commission Development Committee
- Draft Unapproved Minutes of April 19, 2022, Transportation Advisory Committee-TAC
- Draft Unapproved Minutes of April 20, 2022, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee
- Draft Unapproved Minutes of April 26, 2022, Transportation / MPO
- Draft Unapproved Minutes of April 27, 2022, Regional Issues Committee
- Draft Unapproved Minutes of the May 5, 2022, Finance Committee
- Resume – Meg Arvin
- Beyond Mobility Fact Sheets
- Recommended FY 23 BRPC Budget and Explanatory Memo
- Technical Assistance Memo April 2022