



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

Thursday, June 2, 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

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

René Wood, Commission Development Committee Chair, Sheffield

Sam Haupt, At-large, Peru Delegate

Others Present: Brittany Polito, iBerkshires; Laura Mensi, Monterey Delegate; Nancy Socha, Stockbridge Delegate

Staff Present: Thomas Matuszko, Executive Director; Marianne Sniezek, Office Manager; Kate Hill Tapia, Office Administrator; Meg Arvin, Public Health Planner

II. Approval Executive Committee Meeting May 12, 2022 Minutes

Roger Bolton moved to approve the minutes of the May 12, 2022 meeting.

The motion was seconded by René Wood and approved by a roll call vote from John Duval, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, CJ Hoss, Roger Bolton, René Wood, and Sam Haupt.

III. Financial Reports

A. May Expenditures Report

There were no questions.

René Wood moved to accept the report as presented, and Roger Bolton seconded the motion. It was approved by a roll vote from John Duval, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, CJ Hoss, Roger Bolton, René Wood, and Sam Haupt.

B. Accounts Receivable Report

The Dalton over 90 claim is in progress. Morton Salt overpaid their deposit; a

refund will be sent if needed.

C. Line of Credit Report

No activity.

D. Investment Plan Policy (OPEB Trust)

The Finance Committee will work on an Investment Plan Policy for the OPEB Trust per the recommendation of BRPC's auditor. Members are open to ESG (environmental social governance) funds as long as they are classified safe risk-wise.

E. Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund

The Berkshire Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund will receive partial repayment of \$212,109.65 from Powerhouse Square in Great Barrington. There is a possibility of receiving full payment. Tom praised Attorney Steve Narey for his persistence in pursuing the repayment.

F. Correction in April Accounts Receivable Report

The item in the over 90 days column that was higher than the total amount due was correct. A refund and reduced invoice had not been corrected in the spreadsheet.

G. Other (For information only) - none

IV. Delegate & Alternate Issues - none

V. Items Requiring Action

A. Approval to Submit Grant Application to MIIA Wellness Program

Approval was requested to submit a grant application to the MIIA Wellness Program, repeating last year's popular bi-weekly healthy snacks delivery and sit-to-stand desks or risers. The amount will be up to \$5000. The staff lead is Marianne Sniezek.

René Wood motioned to approve the submission of a grant application to the MIIA Wellness Program. Sheila Irvin seconded it. It was approved by a roll call vote from John Duval, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, CJ Hoss, Roger Bolton, René Wood, and Sam Haupt.

B. Approval to Revise BRPC's Telework Policy

Approval was requested to extend BRPC's Telework Policy another fiscal year.

René Wood moved to approve extending the BRPC's Telework Policy another fiscal year. Roger Bolton seconded the motion. It was approved by a roll call vote from John Duval, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, CJ Hoss, Roger Bolton, René Wood, and Sam Haupt.

C. Approval to Submit Grant Application to Regional Food System Partnerships Program with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Approval was requested, after the fact, for the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the USDA's Regional Food System Partnerships Program and approve any resulting contracts and agreements. The implementation and expansion of the "Strengthening the Berkshire County Regional Food System with Locally-Sourced Mobile Farmers Market to Serve Low Access Populations" (Berkshire Mobile Farmers Market) project will build on efforts to expand local food production and delivery systems and bring the benefits of fresh and healthy locally grown food to underserved communities and individuals.

BRPC partners include Berkshire Bounty, Berkshire Grown, Southern Berkshire Rural Health Network, Berkshire United Way, and Community Health Programs. The total amount requested is \$645,193.86. The project partners will mostly provide the required cost share or match of \$227,678.33, with BRPC's share coming from existing funds in the Public Health Program. Public Health Program Manager Laura Kittross, lkittross@berkshireplanning.org, is the project lead. BRPC would receive \$20-30,000.

Sam Haupt moved to approve, after the fact, for the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the USDA's Regional Food System Partnerships Program and approve any resulting contracts and agreements. Roger Bolton seconded the motion. It was approved by a roll call vote from John Duval, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, CJ Hoss, Roger Bolton, René Wood, and Sam Haupt.

D. Other – none

VI. Committee Reports

A. Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

The Transportation Advisory Committee met on May 17, 2022. The main topics were the draft 2023-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the FY2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Draft unapproved meeting minutes were in the meeting materials.

B. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee (CEDS)

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee met on May 18, 2022. Topics included an update on Berkshire Benchmarks and resiliency planning, funded through the CARES Act. The SWOT analysis process continued to identify goals and objectives for the new C.E.D.S. Draft unapproved meeting minutes were in the meeting materials.

C. Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

The MPO met on May 24, 2022. The main topics were amendments to the 2022-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), endorsement of the

2023-2027 TIP, initiation of the 21-day public comment period for the draft FFY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program, and a presentation on MassDOT's Long Range Transportation Plan. John Duval voted in the affirmative, as directed by the Commission. Draft unapproved meeting minutes were not yet available.

E. Environmental Review Committee

There was consensus that the ERC could submit comments on the environmental impact report about Eversource's proposal to clear-cut trees under the high voltage transmission line passing through Berkshire County. Comments are due July 8. The Executive Committee would ratify the comment letter at the next meeting, July 14.

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

- 1Berkshire - Façade Improvement Grant Program - \$3,000
- Berkshire United Way – Berkshire Benchmarks 2023 - \$10,000
- New England Rural Health Association - Rural Vaccine Equity - \$225,000
- DCR - Outdoor Recreation Website - \$200,000
- Economic Development Administration – Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy - \$34,448
- Lanesborough – Storm Water - \$4,000
- Housatonic Valley Association – Berkshire Clean, Cold, Connected Restoration Partnership - \$4,000
- 1Berkshire – Online Outdoor Recreation Asset Map and Commerce Connectivity - \$36,500
- 1Berkshire – North Adams Business Guide - \$20,000
- Adams – Green Communities - \$10,000
- West Stockbridge – Green Communities - \$10,000

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 apply for and accept funds from MountainOne for \$10,000 to support a Government Funding Clearinghouse. No Match is required; money would pass through to BRPC, except for a 2% Administration fee. The contacts are Tom Matuszko and Laura Brennan.

C. Staff Updates

- Stephen Murray started May 16, 2022, as a part-time Public Health Project Specialist (his resume was attached)
- Sherdyl Fernandez-Aubert started May 23, 2022, as an Energy Advocate (his resume was attached)
- Charlie McWeeny, an intern from Princeton University, will work on

Economic Development (his resume was attached)

- The Public Health Program is looking for one or two general Planners.

D. Rural Policy Advisory Commission (RPAC) Update

The Rural Policy Advisory Commission did not meet in May.

E. Berkshire Flyer

The Berkshire Flyer Service between New York City and Pittsfield via Albany-Rensselaer, NY, starts Friday, July 8, and will operate on summer weekends. The Flyer will depart from Penn Station at 3:16 pm on Fridays and arrive at Joseph Scelsi Intermodal Transportation Center at 7:12 pm. The Sunday return trip, making all the same stops, will depart Pittsfield at 3:00 pm and arrive in New York at 7:05 pm. A press release was in the meeting packet. 1Berkshire is marketing the service. Click [HERE](#) to access their marketing Toolkit. This is a Pilot service. Everyone is encouraged to promote it to New York City friends and contacts.

F. Northern Tier Passenger Rail

The next virtual meeting of the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Working Group will be on June 22, 2022, from 1–2:30 pm. The study team will provide an update and engage the Working Group in a review and discussion of existing conditions in the study area. For more information about the study and to submit a comment or question, go to <https://www.mass.gov/northern-tier-passenger-rail-study>.

G. State of the County Report

The State of the County report, prepared largely by BRPC staff through the Berkshire Benchmarks initiative, is available at berkshirebenchmarks.org. The report identifies and tracks indicators to show how our region is performing across eight sectors: Economy, Education, Environment, Government, Health, Housing, Social Environment, and Transportation. These indicators highlight the region's successes and challenges over time and will be updated annually. John noted that Mark Maloy did a great presentation at the Adams Select Board meeting.

H. Berkshire Benchmarks

A complimentary part of the State of the County report is a revamped Berkshire Benchmarks website, a large data repository with more information about the Indicators mentioned above. Members are urged to use the site to assist in decision-making and grant applications.

I. Open Meeting Law

Senator Brownsberger filed an amendment to extend remote meeting provisions until December 15, 2023. It was approved by the Senate and has to be resolved in the House/Senate Conference Committee. BRPC will share Conference Committee members' contact information. Tom encouraged members to advocate for the extension.

J. DLTA Funding

DLTA FY23 funding is not in the Senate version of the budget. It is in the House version. It will need to be added to the final budget. Like the above Open Meeting Law topic, it will go to the same Conference Committee, and support is requested.

K. Western Mass Grants Workshop Series

Working with the area's legislators and western R.P.A.s, four grant sessions were held. The recordings and materials can be reviewed at <https://berkshireplanning.org>. René found the sessions invaluable and suggested USDA as another topic.

The June 7th session on broadband and cybersecurity funding opportunities is postponed until there is more information on the new federal funding for these programs.

L. Community Impact Fees

Tom will investigate what is happening with Host Community Agreements for cannabis businesses. The concern is that a joint conference committee is considering changing the agreement between the state and municipalities, potentially taking away local control and requiring repayment of fees.

VI. Old Business

A. Annual Meeting

After considering several locations, it was decided to commit to KJ Nosh and the Greenock Country Club in Lee for approximately \$38 per person. BRPC will pay for staff, speaker, and awardee and supplement the cost to keep it at \$40 per attendee. Tom will communicate with Berkshire Selectmen's Association.

B. Other (For information only) - none

VII. New Business

A. Summer Meeting Schedule

On July 14th the Executive Committee will meet at 4:00 pm and the full Commission at 5:30.

Commission meeting agenda items were discussed. Members can be polled.

- Election of FY2023 officers (required)
- Committee membership for FY2023
- Housing - emphasizing actions municipalities can take
- Berkshire Benchmark presentation
- Massachusetts budget process
- EV charging stations – meeting the demand
- Greylock Glen presentation – John can reach out to Donna Cesan
- Training for new Commission members was mentioned, that is usually before the September meeting

B. Executive Director Performance Review

Tom will submit a compact self-review for discussion at the next Executive Committee meeting.

C. Workforce Housing Funding in Supplemental Budget

Tom received an email about the possibility of \$200 million in "workforce housing" with priority for Berkshire and Cape Cod counties in the Governor's supplemental budget. He will share more information when available.

D. Adjournment

René Wood motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:21 pm, seconded by Sheila Irvin, and unanimously approved.

Attachments:

- Unapproved Minutes of May 12, 2022, Executive Committee Meeting
- May Expenditures Reports
- May Receivables Report
- May Line of Credit Report
- Telework Policy - Draft
- Draft Unapproved Minutes of the May 17, 2022 Transportation Advisory Committee-TAC
- Draft Unapproved Minutes of the May 18, 2022 Commission Development Committee
- Resumes – Stephen Murray, Sherdyl Fernandez-Aubert, Charlie McWeeny
- Press Release Berkshire Flyer
- Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study Newsletter