



# 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, September 1, 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 March 31, 2023.

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

#### **A. The meeting was called to order at 4:01 pm.**

Vice Chair Malcolm Fick called the 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:  
Malcolm Fick, Vice Chair, Gt Barrington Alternate  
Sheila Irvin, Clerk, Pittsfield Delegate  
Buck Donovan, Treasurer, Lee Delegate (4:08)  
Roger Bolton, Environmental Review Committee Chair, Williamstown Alternate  
René Wood, Commission Development Committee Chair, Sheffield  
Kyle Hanlon, At-large, North Adams Delegate (left 4:48)  
Sam Haupt, At-large, Peru Delegate

Others Present: Brittany Polito, iBerkshires (left 4:41); Don Gagnon, Washington; Jonathan James, New Marlborough; Grant McGregor, Dalton

Staff Present: Thomas Matuszko, Executive Director; Marianne Sniezek, Office Manager; Kate Hill Tapia, Office Administrator; Marie Brady, Public Health Planner; Krystal Bartley, Human Resource Payroll Assistant

### **II. Approval Executive Committee Meeting June 2, 2022 Minutes**

Kyle Hanlon moved to approve the minutes of the June 2, 2022 meeting. The motion was seconded by Roger Bolton and approved by a roll call vote from Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, René Wood, Roger Bolton, Kyle Hanlon, and Sam Haupt.

### **III. Financial Reports**

#### **A. July / August (partial) Expenditures Report**

René Wood moved to accept the report as presented, and Sheila Irvin seconded the motion. A roll vote approved it from Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, René Wood, Roger Bolton, Kyle Hanlon, and Sam Haupt.

For explanation, the Lenox MVP expenses (16290 and 16301) were for technical consultation on culverts.

**B. Accounts Receivable Report**

Tom noted that the CDGB claims are in process.

**C. Line of Credit Report**

Cash flow is very favorable.

**D. FY Yearend Report**

Fiscal Year 2022 closed with an increase in revenue of \$925,905 over FY2021. FY2022 revenue of \$6.1 million came from federal and state grants and local organizations or nonprofit agreements. BRPC managed 139 contracts in FY2022. The FY22 General Fund Revenue \$125,576.25 and Expenses \$151,024.97 resulted in a yearly deficit of (\$25,448.72).

**E. Other** (for information only)

The OPEB retirement trust fund was discussed. BRPC makes annual contributions. Tom did not believe the other regional planning agencies (RPA's) have been contributing at the same level as BRPC and have this as a liability.

Adelson has started working with the Administration team on the FY22 audit.

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

**V. Items Requiring Action**

**A. Approval to Rescind the Emergency Closure Policy**

The Executive Committee was requested to rescind BRPC's Emergency Closure Policy since staff can and do work remotely most of the time; the policy is no longer necessary.

René Wood motioned to rescind the emergency closure policy. Roger Bolton seconded it. It was approved by a roll call vote from Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, René Wood, Roger Bolton, Kyle Hanlon, and Sam Haupt.

**B. Approval to Submit a Grant Application to the U.S. DOT Safe Streets and Road for All Grant Program**

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the U.S. Department of Transportation Safe Streets and Roads for All program and approve any resulting contracts and agreements.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) established the new Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program with \$5 billion for the next five years. The grant would fund a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan with a budget of approximately \$240,000. MassDOT is being asked to provide the required 20% match. The BRPC contact is Senior Transportation Planner Nick Russo, [nrusso@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:nrusso@berkshireplanning.org).

Noted to consider state-owned highways in town center issues. The Action Plan identifies fixes setting the stage for funding applications.

René Wood moved to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the U.S. Department of Transportation Safe Streets and Roads for All program and approve any resulting contracts and agreements. Sam Haupt seconded the motion. It was approved by a roll call vote from Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, René Wood, Roger Bolton, Kyle Hanlon, and Sam Haupt.

**C. Other** (for information only)

**VI. Committee Reports**

**A. Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)**

The M.P.O. met on July 26 and August 23, 2022, and approved amendments to the 2022-2026 Transportation Improvement Program, 5310 funding for BRTA, and 5317 funding for Great Barrington. MassDOT staff presented its Municipal Pavement Management Program. Draft unapproved minutes were in the meeting materials.

**B. Regional Issues Committee**

The committee met on August 3, 2022. Comments on the proposed Stretch Energy and Specialized Municipal Opt-In Codes were approved. The consensus was that the codes are not stringent enough. The Green Communities Climate Leaders proposal was discussed, and BRPC staff will encourage municipalities to comment on it. A copy of those comments was in the meeting materials, as were draft unapproved minutes.

**C. Berkshire Brownfields Committee**

The committee met on August 10, 2022, reviewed loans and subgrant increases applications, and discussed the new assessment grant. Draft unapproved meeting minutes were not yet available.

**D. Other** (for information only)

**VII. Executive Director's Report**

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

New Grants and Contracts received/initiated from 5/28/2022 to 6/30/2022

- Adams – Outsource Planner FY23 - \$11,000
- Lanesborough – Stormwater FY23 - \$17,000
- River Run Apartments - Public Health Nursing Services FY23 - \$733.33
- Cheshire - Public Health Nursing Services FY23 - \$ 4,616.01
- FRCOG – Emergency Preparedness Planning FY23 - \$152,788
- Fairview Hospital – Berkshire and Franklin Medical Reserve Corps - \$44,112
- Lee – Master Plan and Open Space & Recreation Space - \$65,000

- Department of Public Health – Shared Services FY23 – Public Health Excellence & Training Hub - \$849,698.50 over 3 years
- Berkshire Housing Development Corporation and Housing Services Inc - Public Health Nursing Services FY23 - \$2,400
- Florida Pavement Procurement - \$5,000

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 authorized the President to sign:

- The Renewal of the Directors and Officers Insurance
- Berkshires Tomorrow and BRPC Software Lease agreement for 65 Subscriptions of Microsoft Office 365 for FY2023 totaling \$9,750
- Acceptance of a \$15,000 grant from the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation for the Arts Build Community Initiative to support the Berkshire Cultural Asset Network (BCAN)
- BTI applied as the lead applicant for the National Endowment for the Arts Our Town grant. The City of Pittsfield's Office of Cultural Development (OCD) has signed on as primary partner. The purpose of the grant is to create a Cultural Plan for the City of Pittsfield. BTI has requested \$75K from NEA for a \$150K project that requires a 50% in-kind match; most of the match comes from staff time and/or services and equipment provided by the OCD. The remainder comes from in-kind service contributions from local arts and culture stakeholders.

**C. Staff Updates**

- Stephen Murray was recognized through the 2022 Berkshire 40 under 40 for his overdose prevention and intervention work
- Allison Egan was promoted to Principal Planner
- Andy Ottoson was promoted to Senior Planner
- Ned Saviski started August 8 as a Public Health Project Specialist Trainer/Inspector
- Meg Arvin, Public Health Planner, resigned
- Krystal Bartley started August 29 as the Human Resources Payroll Assistant
- Marie Brady started August 29 as a Public Health planner
- Karen Pelto starts September 1 as a part-time Grants Specialist
- Open positions:
  - Environmental & Energy Planner
  - Public Health Trainer/Inspectors

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

The Rural Policy Advisory Commission did not meet since the last Executive Committee meeting.

**E. West – East Passenger Rail**

Chapter 176 of the Acts of 2022, aka the recently passed Transportation

Bill, created a "commission to investigate and receive public testimony concerning public entities now in existence or that may be created by statute with the ability to design, permit, construct, operate and maintain passenger rail service that meets the standards of at least 1 of the Final Alternatives set forth in the East-West Passenger Rail Study Final Report issued by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation in January 2021." Tom and several Regional Planning Agency Executive Directors were named to this Commission. This final report is due March 31, 2023.

**F. Berkshire Flyer**

The service between New York City and Pittsfield ends on Labor Day weekend. Ridership has met expectations and has mostly arrived on time.

**G. DLTA Funding**

The final version of the budget included level DLTA program funding. Hopefully, contracts will be forthcoming so BRPC can begin projects in January. BRPC will send a solicitation to municipalities toward the end of the calendar year.

**H. Rural Schools Commission**

The Rural Schools Commission's final report is available at [malegislature.gov](http://malegislature.gov). The report makes 36 recommendations regarding rural school aid, student transportation, declining enrollment, regionalization, shared services, special education, school choice, and health care.

**I. Statewide Municipal Partnerships Conference**

The Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies (MARPA) and the Massachusetts Division of Local Services (DLS) are co-sponsoring the 2022 Statewide Municipal Partnerships Conference at the College of the Holy Cross on Thursday, September 29, 2022. The conference title is "Building the Foundation for our Future: Equitable Infrastructure Modernization in Massachusetts." Pre-registration: <http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07ejbw4vt133d2fed8&llr=jqfo5obab>

**J. Economic Development District**

Berkshire County was recently designated as an Economic Development District (EDD) by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA.) This designation can open doors to federal funding opportunities. Two major investments through EDA have occurred recently: \$914,465 to support a Manufacturing Academy at the Berkshire Innovation Center and \$2,894,500 to support water infrastructure needs at Greylock Glen in Adams. BRPC's assistance in securing these funds was critical. As part of the CEDS planning process, a simple survey is going to BRPC Delegates to help leverage this strong relationship with EDA. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5JDV6DC>

**K. Other** (for information only)

## **VI. Old Business**

### **A. Executive Director Performance Review**

Postponed.

### **B. Annual Meeting**

Invitations were sent via email.

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

## **VII. New Business**

### **A. Employee Handbook**

With the addition of the new Human Resources Payroll Assistant, an employee handbook and updates to policies and procedures are expected to be done before the next fiscal year.

### **B. Kusik Awards**

A vote was taken to confirm Senator Hinds and Lt. Governor Polito as this year's awardees. Affirmative from: Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, René Wood, Roger Bolton, and Sam Haupt.

### **C. September Commission Meeting**

The Commission Chair will decide if there is a meeting on September 29, before the Annual Meeting at the Greenock Country Club in Lee.

### **D. Other** (for information only)

There was discussion about filling an Assistant Director position in acknowledgment of Tom's heavy workload.

Sheffield starts cable tv negotiations in October or November.

### **E. Adjournment**

René Wood motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:23 pm, seconded by Sheila Irvin, and unanimously approved.

#### Attachments:

- Unapproved Minutes of July 14, 2022, BRPC Executive Committee Meeting
- July – August (partial) Expenditures Report
- Accounts Receivable Report
- July Line of Credit Report
- Executive Director's Memorandum
- BRPC Emergency Closure Policy
- Draft Unapproved Minutes of the July 26, 2022 MPO
- Draft Unapproved Minutes of the August 23, 2022 MPO
- Draft Unapproved Minutes of the August 3, 2022 Regional Issues Committee
- Building Code Comment letter
- Resumes – Saviski, Bartley, Brady, Pelto
- Statewide Municipal partnerships Conference
- July Technical Assistance Memo