



BRPC

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Thursday, January 5, 2023

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.

Chair John Duval 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:

John Duval, Chair, Adams Alternate

Malcolm Fick, Vice Chair, Gt Barrington Alternate

Buck Donovan, Treasurer, Lee Delegate

Kyle Hanlon, CEDS Chair, North Adams, Delegate

Roger Bolton, Environmental Review Committee Chair, Williamstown Alternate

Rene Wood, Commission Development Committee Chair, Sheffield

Sam Haupt, At-large, Peru Delegate

Others Present: Mark Anthony, Otis; Peter Traub, Cheshire; Christine Rasmussen, Stockbridge; Jamie Minacci, Stockbridge; Laura Mensi, Monterey; Brittany Polito, iBerkshires.

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

II. Approval of Executive Committee Meeting Minutes from December 1, 2022

Rene Wood moved to approve the minutes of the December 1, 2022 meeting. The motion was seconded by Roger Bolton and approved by a roll call vote from John Duval, Malcolm Fick, Buck Donovan, Sam Haupt, Roger Bolton, and Kyle Hanlon. Rene Wood abstained.

III. Financial Reports

A. November 24 – December 28, 2022 Expenditures Report

It was clarified that the credit card bill is listed as a payment and the individual credit card charges as expenses in the check register.

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

B. Accounts Receivable Report/Assessments

Nothing outstanding or concerning.

C. Line of Credit Report

The cash balance is quite good.

D. Line of Credit Increase

Rene Wood moved to increase the line of credit to a maximum of \$500,000, seconded by Sam Haupt and approved by roll call vote: John Duval, Malcolm Fick, Buck Donovan, Sam Haupt, Roger Bolton, Rene Wood, and Kyle Hanlon.

E. Other - none

IV. Delegate & Alternate Issues - none

V. Items Requiring Action

A. Revisions to the Telework Policy

The Executive Committee was requested to approve a revision to BRPC's Telework Policy that newly hired full-time permanent employees must work in-office at least four days per week for the first month to facilitate the onboarding and orientation process.

Rene Wood motioned to approve the revision to the Telework Policy; Malcolm Fick seconded it. A roll call vote approved it from John Duval, Malcolm Fick, Buck Donovan, Sam Haupt, Roger Bolton, Rene Wood, and Kyle Hanlon.

B. Other (for information only) - none

VI. Committee Reports

A. Metropolitan Planning Organization

The MPO held a joint meeting with the TAC (Transportation Advisory Committee) on December 20, 2022, featuring a discussion on the State's Long Range Transportation Plan and the Berkshire Regional Transportation Plan. Draft meeting minutes were not yet available.

B. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

The CEDS committee met on December 14, 2022. Changes to the 2023-2027 CEDS and the final endorsement of the CEDS document for submission to the Economic Development Administration were approved. The CEDS was submitted to EDA on December 15th. Draft meeting minutes were not yet available. Kyle, John, and Roger noted that staff members Laura Brennan and Wylie Goodman did a "stellar" job on the CEDS, and it is far and above the best report the group has prepared.

C. Regional Issues Committee

The Regional Issues Committee met on December 7, 2022. Jay DiPuccio spoke about establishing the Franklin Regional Council of Governments. Draft meeting minutes were not yet available. Christine Hoyt of the Select Board Members Association will be at the next meeting.

D. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee met on December 15 and December 21, 2022. The publicly posted virtual meeting link for the December 15th meeting was incorrect hence a second meeting was held on December 21st. The main topics were the review and acceptance of the FY2022 audit and a recommendation for the FY24 assessment amount. The committee recommended a 2.5% increase over FY23. A review of the OPEB Trust Balance, the need for an Investment Plan, an update on the state retirement system, and an increase to the line of credit were also discussed. Notes from the 12/15 meeting and draft minutes from the 12/21 meeting were included.

The audit went well due to the "magnificent" staff efforts, especially Marianne Sniezek, Linda Ludwig, and Alecia Herrick. It will be emailed to Executive Committee members, and wording will be put on the website that the full document is available upon request.

E. Commission Development Committee

This committee met on December 8, 2022 to discuss possible amendments to the BRPC bylaws. It was agreed not to set one education topic for Full Commission meetings. Draft unapproved minutes were included.

VII. Executive Director's Report

A. Report on New Contracts/Agreements

New Grants and Contracts received/initiated from 11/26/2022 to 12/25/2022

- Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs - Decarbonizing Berkshire County Through Municipal Energy Self-Sufficiency - \$37,500
- Clarksburg - Grant Writing Assistance - \$20,000
- Metropolitan Area Planning Council - MassTrails Regional Trail Map - \$5,000
- Mass Audubon Society - Rowe Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness - \$2,300
- Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness - \$2,300
- Lee - Stockbridge Road Parcel Planning - \$25,000
- Hancock - Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaption Plan - \$25,000

Grants and Contracts not received.

BRPC are not aware of any grants and contracts not received.

B. Berkshires Tomorrow Inc. (BTI) Update

There was no recent activity. A meeting was scheduled after the Executive Committee meeting to approve the tax return and routine yearly activities.

C. Staff Updates

- Community Planner Cara Farrell has left BRRC to take a position as shared HR Director for Adams, North Adams, and Williamstown. Her last day was 12/30/22.
- Community Planner Chris Brown is leaving BRPC to take a housing development position in New York. His last day is 1/13/23.

BRPC intends to fill the positions as soon as possible.

D. Rural Policy Advisory Commission (RPAC) Update

The Rural Policy Advisory Commission met on December 9, 2022 and discussed legislative and budgetary priorities for rural communities to advance in the upcoming legislative session. Tom will forward the list when finalized.

E. Passenger Rail

West-East Rail - The Special Commission to address West-East Passenger Rail governance and operations held a public hearing at the Berkshire Innovation Center on Friday, December 9, 2022. Numerous attendees and remote participants representing several sectors testified, re-stating the importance of passenger rail to the Berkshires.

Berkshire Flyer - The Berkshire Flyer committee will meet next week. They are waiting for this year's ridership numbers and costs from Amtrak to inform plans for next year's service that will run from Memorial Day through Columbus/Indigenous People's Day.

Northern Tier Passenger Rail – A virtual public workshop for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study will be held on Wednesday, January 11, 2023, at 6:00 pm via Zoom. The study team will present the two initial service plan alternatives and evaluation framework. Meeting registration information is on the Study website.

F. Community One Stop for Growth Awards

The Expression of Interest (EOI) period for the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development fiscal 2024 Community One Stop for Growth application process is open. The Community One Stop for Growth program contains 12 state grant programs, including the MassWorks Program. It is a single application portal and collaborative review process of community development grant programs that make targeted investments based on a development continuum. Submission of an EOI is a highly recommended but optional step in the process. Applicants may submit one EOI to seek input on several potential projects. Applicants that submit an EOI by Feb. 3, 2023, may seek input on up to five project ideas, while those who submit EOIs after Feb. 3 may seek input on up to two projects. The EOI period is open through March 17, 2023 after which applicants must prepare and submit a full application, due June 2, 2023.

G. 120 Day Notice Waiver Requests

The Commonwealth must provide a 120 day notice to certain parties, BRPC being one of them, when considering a purchase of land or an interest in land. Tom received and approved 120 day notice waivers for the possible purchase of agricultural preservation restrictions by the Department of Agricultural Resources on land in Richmond (12.44 acres) and Sheffield (13.95 acres). He also received and approved a 120 day notice waiver for the Department of Conservation and Recreation to potentially purchase an interest in 191 acres in Cheshire.

H. Massachusetts Commission on Clean Heat

The Commission on Clean Heat was established by Executive Order to advise the Baker-Polito Administration on a framework for long-term greenhouse gas emission reductions from heating fuels. The Commission released the Massachusetts Commission on Clean Heat Final Report on November 30, 2022 which includes a set of policy recommendations to meet the mandate to sustainably reduce the use of heating fuels and minimize the greenhouse gas emissions from buildings. An Executive Summary was attached.

I. Massachusetts Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2050 (2050CECP)

On December 21, 2022, the Baker-Polito Administration released the Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2050 (2050 CECP), the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' comprehensive and aggressive plan to achieve Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions in 2050. An Executive Summary was attached.

J. Other (For information only) - none

VIII. Old Business

A. Possible Bylaw Amendments

Bylaw amendments proposed by the Commission Development Committee were discussed and revised. The revisions will be sent to the Executive Committee for final input so the amendments can be presented for approval to the full Commission on January 19.

- several grammatical or clarification changes
- allowing the Executive Director to serve as the interim Committee Chair in the absence of a Committee Chair and Vice Chair
- eliminating the requirement that an at-large Executive Committee have knowledge of transportation issues
- having the Chair be a non-voting ex-officio member of other non-Executive Committee committees
- establishing that the Commission can employ an Assistant Director and describing some of the responsibilities of an Assistant Director
- changes to the amendment process to bring it into compliance with the Open Meeting Law

B. Other (for information only) - none

IX. New Business

A. January Commission Meeting

The next Full Commission hybrid meeting is on January 19, 2023.

The Finance Committee's FY 24 assessments recommendation and proposed Bylaw amendments need to be approved. The Audit Management Letter will be shared so members know how well BRPC is doing. Potential topics include the Community Preservation Act, local technical assistance for working with communities on grants, and a presentation on outdoor recreation projects funded by investors (like Greylock Glen).

B. Other (for information only) - none

X. Adjournment

Kyle Hanlon motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:26 pm, seconded by Roger Bolton, and unanimously approved by a roll call vote:

John Duval, Malcolm Fick, Rene Wood, Buck Donovan, Kyle Hanlon, Roger Bolton, and Sam Haupt.

Attachments:

- Unapproved Minutes of December 1, 2022, BRPC Executive Committee Meeting
- November 24, 2022 to December 28 2022 Expenditures Report
- Accounts Receivable Report / Assessments
- December Line of Credit Report
- Executive Director's Memorandum
- Finance Committee Notes of December 15, 2022
- Draft Unapproved Minutes of the December 21, 2022 Finance Committee meeting
- FY 2022 Audit Management Letter
- FY 2024 Recommended Assessment
- Draft Unapproved Minutes of the December 8, 2022 Commission Development Committee
- Northern Tier Passenger Rail Hearing Notice
- Executive Summary – Massachusetts Commission on Clean Heat: Final Report
- Executive Summary – The Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2050
- BRPC Draft Proposed Bylaw Amendments
- November Technical Assistance Memo