



BRPC

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Thursday, February 2, 2023

Hybrid 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

Sheila Irvin, Clerk, Pittsfield Delegate

Kyle Hanlon, CEDS Chair, North Adams Delegate

Roger Bolton, Environmental Review Committee Chair, Williamstown Alternate

Rene Wood, Commission Development Committee Chair, Sheffield Alternate

Sam Haupt, At-large, Peru Delegate

Others Present: Christine Rasmussen, Stockbridge (late); "iPhone" - unidentified

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

II. Approval of Executive Committee Meeting Minutes from January 5, 2023

Rene Wood moved to approve the minutes of the January 5, 2023 meeting. The motion was seconded by Malcolm Fick and approved by a roll call vote from John Duval, Malcolm Fick, Buck Donovan, Rene Wood, Sam Haupt, Roger Bolton, and Kyle Hanlon. Sheila Irvin abstained.

III. Financial Reports

A. December 26, 2022 to January 26, 2023 Expenditures Report

The new credit card charges format is easier to understand.

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

B. Accounts Receivable Report/Assessments

Committee members and Tom appreciated the Admin Finance staff for their work. Receivables are at their lowest in a long time.

C. Line of Credit Report

The cash balance continues to be good.

D. Line of Credit Increase

The increase in the line of credit to a maximum of \$500,000 is in process.

E. Other - none

IV. Delegate & Alternate Issues - none

V. Items Requiring Action

A. Approval to Submit Grant Application to the National Council on Aging COVID-19 and Influenza Vaccine Uptake Initiative

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize, after the fact, the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the National Council on Aging COVID-19 and Influenza Vaccine Uptake Initiative and to sign any resulting contracts and agreements. BRPC's Sustaining a Collaboration with Partners to Increase Berkshire County Vaccinations project will help ensure everyone has the information and resources they need to get vaccinated. The amount requested was \$105,900 for 15 months, and no match is required.

Roger Bolton motioned to approve the grant application submission and authorization for the Executive Director to sign any resulting contracts and agreements; Rene Wood seconded it. A roll call vote approved it from John Duval, Malcolm Fick, Buck Donovan, Sheila Irvin, Sam Haupt, Rene Wood, Roger Bolton, and Kyle Hanlon.

B. Other (for information only) - none

VI. Committee Reports

A. Metropolitan Planning Organization

The MPO met on January 24, 2023, featuring initial survey results for the Regional Transportation Plan, a report of BRTA's "Try Transit" free fare, approval of a minor administrative adjustment/budget reallocation to the FFY 2023 UPWP, and approval to release the 2023-2027 TIP amendment related to transit. Draft unapproved meeting minutes were in the meeting materials.

B. Regional Issues Committee

The Regional Issues Committee met on January 25, 2023. The main topic was the challenges communities face in filling municipal positions. Christine Hoyt from the Berkshire County Selectman's Association provided some updates from the Massachusetts Municipal Association. Another topic was the

survey of municipal leaders to quantify the challenges municipalities face with hiring. Draft 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 11/26/2022 to 12/25/2022

- Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs – Sheffield Sustainable and Affordable Housing - \$25,000
- Massachusetts Marketing Partnership/Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism – Berkshire Funding Focus - \$75,000
- Metropolitan Area Planning Council - Equity in Emergency Management Consultant – \$21,500
- Town of Monterey – Hupi Road Drainage Improvements - \$42,600
- 1Berkshire – Façade Improvement Grant Program - \$2,500
- National Endowment for the Arts – Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts - \$100,000; BRPC is only the fiduciary agent.
- Executive Office for Administration & Finance – Online Permitting Software Upgrade - \$200,000 for Efficiency and Regionalization

Grants and Contracts not received.

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

B. Berkshires Tomorrow Inc. (BTI) Update

The board met on January 5, 2023, approved the 2023 Budget (in the meeting materials) and 2022 tax return and conducted routine yearly activities.

C. Staff Updates

Open positions include two Community Planners, a Transportation Planner, and a Public Health Inspector/Trainer.

D. Rural Policy Advisory Commission (RPAC) Update

The Rural Policy Advisory Commission did not meet in January. The next meeting is tentatively set for Friday, February 10th; no agenda has been set.

E. Passenger Rail

- West-East Rail - The Special Commission to address West-East Passenger Rail governance and operations held the second of several required public hearings in Greenfield on Tuesday, January 24, 2023. The next hearing has not been scheduled. Limited information is available at [East-West Rail Commission \(malegislature.gov\)](https://www.malegislature.gov/East-West-Rail-Commission). [For more information, go to East-West Rail in Massachusetts – Trains In The Valley.](#)
- Berkshire Flyer - The Berkshire Flyer is gearing up for weekend service from Memorial Day to Columbus Day / Indigenous Peoples' Day.

- [Northern Tier Passenger Rail](#) – A virtual public workshop for the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study was held on Wednesday, January 11, 2023. The Study team presented two initial service plan alternatives, a lower and higher cost one, and the evaluation framework. Information about this meeting is available on the study website, [Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study | Mass.gov](#).

F. Additional information:

- The EDA approved the CEDS
- CPTC in-person conference on March 18
- Massachusetts Select Board Association Western and Rural Massachusetts Municipal Conference, Saturday, April 1, Holyoke

VIII. Old Business

A. Assistant Director Position

The bylaw changes approved at the January full Commission approved the establishment of an Assistant Director position. The Executive Director is working on a position description.

B. Other (for information only) - none

IX. New Business

A. March Commission Meeting

The next Full Commission hybrid meeting is on March 16, 2023. Potential agenda items are:

- Possible "primer" on digital equity planning
- Cyber security
- Meet with state legislators or their aides

B. Municipal Intern Program

Sheffield would be interested in participating in a program where municipalities and or BRPC share interns. BRPC is participating in a career fair at Berkshire Community College on 2/28 and will share information about open positions in our towns and cities.

X. Adjournment

Rene Wood motioned to adjourn the meeting at 4:31 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 January 5, 2023, BRPC Executive Committee Meeting
- December 29, 2022 to January 26, 2023 Expenditures Report
- Accounts Receivable Report / Assessments
- January Line of Credit Report
- Executive Director's Memorandum

- Draft Unapproved Minutes of the January 24, 2023 Metropolitan Planning Organization
- FY2023 Berkshires Tomorrow Approved Budget
- December Technical Assistance Memo