



BRPC

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

JOHN DUVAL, Chair
MALCOLM FICK, Vice-Chair
SHEILA IRVIN, Clerk
BUCK DONOVAN, Treasurer
THOMAS MATUSZKO, A.I.C.P.
Executive Director

FULL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES March 16, 2023

This was a virtual meeting as allowed by Ch. 107 of the Acts of 2022, extending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c.30 sec.20, until March 31, 2023.

The Chair asked the Executive Director to give an update on the status of the Open Meeting Law. Even though a conference committee has not been formed to work out differences between House and Senate proposals, it is hoped the Governor will approve an extension before it expires.

I. Opening

A. The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm.

Chair John Duval stated that per the open meeting law, BRPC was recording this meeting. Others may record the meeting after informing the meeting Chair. Any documents presented must be provided to the Chair at the meeting.

B. Roll Call

The following Commission members were present:

John Duval – Adams Alternate
Shirley Mueller – Alford Alternate (late)
Peter Traub – Cheshire Delegate
Mary McGurn – Egremont Delegate
Pedro Pachano – Great Barrington Delegate
Barb Davis-Hassan – Lanesborough Delegate
Leanne Yinger – Lanesborough Alternate
Buck Donovan – Lee Delegate
Pam Kueber – Lenox Delegate
Laura Mensi – Monterey
Kyle Hanlon – North Adams
Mark Anthony – Otis Delegate
Sheila Irvin – Pittsfield Delegate
Rene Wood – Sheffield Alternate
Nancy Socha – Stockbridge Delegate
Christine Rasmussen – Stockbridge Alternate
Amanda Hamilton – Tyringham Delegate
Kenneth Kuttner – Williamstown Delegate
Roger Bolton – Williamstown Alternate
Doug McNally – Windsor Delegate

Towns with Absent Delegates and no Alternate present:

Becket, Clarksburg, Dalton, Florida, Hancock, Hinsdale, Mt Washington, New Ashford, New Marlborough, Peru, Richmond, Sandisfield, Savoy, Washington, West Stockbridge

Staff Present:

Thomas Matuszko, Kate Hill Tapia, Mark Maloy, Melissa Provencher, Nick Russo, Andy Ottoson

Others Present:

State Senator Paul Mark; Tom Hutcheson

C. Approval of Minutes of January 19, 2023, Meeting

Rene Wood moved to approve the January 19, 2023, draft meeting minutes, and Kyle Hanlon seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The minutes were approved with a roll call vote.

John Duval, Peter Traub, Mary McGurn, Pedro Pachano, Buck Donovan, Laura Mensi, Mark Anthony, Sheila Irvin, Rene Wood, Nancy Socha, Kenneth Kuttner, Doug McNally

Abstained: Barb Davis-Hassan, Pam Kueber, Kyle Hanlon, Amanda Hamilton

II. Comments from the Public

There were no comments from the public.

III. Delegate & Alternate Issues

Alford Delegate Shirley Mueller asked if there is funding for ADA compliance renovations for town buildings. Tom said yes, through the MA Office of Disabilities, and he would have Pat Mullins follow up. Rene Wood offered information on other grant sources.

Barb Davis-Hassan reported that an outstanding Lanesborough invoice was approved for payment.

IV. Executive Committee Actions

There were no questions about the Executive Committee's actions from the February 2023 meeting.

V. Senator Mark Presentation

Paul Mark discussed his new role, committee responsibilities as a State Senator, and legislative priorities. He invited Commission members to contact him and attend Beacon Hill in the Berkshire Hills, 3/25, Lenox Town Hall, 9-1; RSVP to casey.pease@masenate.gov or paul.mark@masenate.gov.

VI. Approval of Grant Applications

A. The Commission was asked to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the U.S. Department of Justice's

Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use Site-based Program RFR. Berkshire Overdose Addiction Prevention Collaborative (BOAPC) will use this to expand the Berkshire Post Overdose Program (BPOP) that provides EMS and Behavioral Health co-response to those who have experienced an overdose or are at higher risk for overdose. This \$1,300,000 three-year grant will be a collaborative project with many community partners. There is no match required. Staff lead Andy Ottoson spoke about the project.

Rene Wood moved to authorize the Executive Director to submit the grant application and sign all necessary contracts, and Amanda Hamilton seconded the motion. There was no discussion. A roll call vote authorized the grant submission.

John Duval, Shirley Mueller, Peter Traub, Mary McGurn, Pedro Pachano, Barb Davis-Hassan, Buck Donovan, Pam Kueber, Laura Mensi, Kyle Hanlon, Sheila Irvin, Rene Wood, Nancy Socha, Amanda Hamilton
Kenneth Kuttner, Doug McNally

- B. Authorization was requested for the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Brownfields Program. The \$2.35 million application is to re-capitalize the Berkshire Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund. There is no match required. Staff Lead Melissa Provencher spoke about the program.

Doug McNally moved to authorize the Executive Director to submit the grant application and sign all necessary contracts, and Rene Wood seconded the motion. There was no discussion. A roll call vote authorized the grant submission.

John Duval, Shirley Mueller, Peter Traub, Mary McGurn, Pedro Pachano, Barb Davis-Hassan, Buck Donovan, Pam Kueber, Laura Mensi, Kyle Hanlon, Mark Anthony, Sheila Irvin, Rene Wood, Nancy Socha, Amanda Hamilton
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VII. Ratification of Environmental Review Committee Comments

Due to a deadline of March 10, 2023, the Executive Committee authorized the Environmental Review Committee to submit comments to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) program on the New England Power (NEP) Company's electrical utility infrastructure upgrade replacing wooden poles with metal ones requiring roadway construction and tree removal. This project goes through Adams, North Adams, Florida, and Monroe. The Commission was asked to ratify the comments. Committee Chair Roger Bolton reviewed the project and the MEPA process.

Roger Bolton made a motion to ratify the comments as submitted by the Environmental Review Committee, seconded by Doug McNally, and approved by a roll call vote:

John Duval, Shirley Mueller, Peter Traub, Mary McGurn, Pedro Pachano, Barb Davis-Hassan, Buck Donovan, Pam Kueber, Laura Mensi, Kyle Hanlon, Mark Anthony, Sheila Irvin, Rene Wood, Nancy Socha, Amanda Hamilton, Kenneth Kuttner, Doug McNally

VIII. Urban Area Boundary Maps

BRPC GIS, Data and IT Manager Mark Maloy reviewed the Census' Urban Area maps and changes from 2010 and 2020.

IX. Executive Director's Report

A. Massachusetts Director of Rural Affairs

Governor Healey announced the creation of a Director of Rural Affairs position in the Executive Office of Economic Development. This position will be responsible for cultivating rural economic development and coordinating with secretariats and state agencies to ensure that the state government is attuned to the unique needs of rural communities. The Rural Policy Advisory Commission has advocated for this.

B. Open Meeting Law

Both branches of the legislature have approved provisions to allow the continued use of remote public meetings until 2025 as part of the supplemental budget. It will likely go to a conference committee to work out differences before final approval. Hopefully, the Governor can approve the bill before March 31st, when the current provisions expire.

C. Western & Rural Massachusetts Conference – April 1, 2023

BRPC is co-sponsoring a Western and Rural Massachusetts conference for municipal officials on April 1, 2023, at the Delaney House, Holyoke. Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll will deliver a keynote address. State Auditor Diana DiZoglio will lead a session covering priorities for rural communities. Registration is at MSA Western Massachusetts Conference (mma.org).

D. Passenger Rail

West-East Rail – The Western MA Passenger Rail Commission's third and fourth public hearings will be held on March 21st: Northampton at 1:00 pm and Springfield at 6:00 pm. Hearing notices were in the meeting materials. The Governor's budget proposes \$8.5 million for Pittsfield track improvements and \$650,000 for five staff positions to work on West-East rail.

X. Adjournment

Kyle Hanlon motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mark Anthony, and approved by roll call vote. The meeting adjourned at 8:43 pm.

John Duval, Shirley Mueller, Peter Traub, Mary McGurn, Pedro Pachano, Barb Davis-Hassan, Buck Donovan, Pam Kueber, Laura Mensi, Kyle Hanlon, Mark

Anthony, Sheila Irvin, Rene Wood, Nancy Socha, Amanda Hamilton Kenneth
Kuttner, Doug McNally