



FULL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES July 20, 2023

This was a virtual meeting as allowed by Ch. 2 of the Acts of 2023 extending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c.30 sec.20 until March 31, 2025.

I. Opening

A. The meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm.

Vice Chair Malcolm Fick stated that per the open meeting law, BRPC was recording this meeting. Others may record the meeting after informing the meeting Chair. Documents presented must be provided to the Chair at the meeting. Josh Bloom reported that he was recording the meeting.

Tom Matuszko announced that Economic Development Program Manager Laura Brennan has been promoted to an additional role as Assistant Director. She will assist with outreach, Commission development, and agency operations.

B. Roll Call

The following Commission members were present:

Peter Traub – Cheshire Delegate
Malcolm Fick – Great Barrington Alternate
Richard Roussin – Hinsdale Alternate
Leanne Yinger – Lanesborough Alternate
Buck Donovan – Lee Delegate
Jonathan James – New Marlborough Delegate
Sheila Irvin – Pittsfield Delegate
Rene Wood – Sheffield Alternate
Christine Rasmussen – Stockbridge Alternate
Peter Matson – Washington Alternate
Roger Bolton – Williamstown Alternate

Towns with no Delegate or Alternate present:

Adams, Alford, Becket, Cheshire, Clarksburg, Dalton, Egremont, Florida, Hancock, Lenox, Monterey, Mt. Washington, New Ashford, North Adams, Otis, Peru, Richmond, Sandisfield, Savoy, Tyringham, West Stockbridge, Windsor

Staff Present:

Thomas Matuszko, Marianne Sniezek, Kate Hill Tapia, Laura Brennan, Clete Kus, Nick Russo

Others Present:

Gail Ceresia, Paula Chenail, Josh Bloom

C. Approval of Minutes of May 18, 2023, Meeting

Sheila Irvin moved to approve the May 18, 2023, draft meeting minutes, and Rene Wood seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The minutes were approved with a roll call vote.

Peter Traub, Malcolm Fick, Dick Roussin, Leanne Yinger, Buck Donovan, Jonathan James, Sheila Irvin, Rene Wood, Christine Rasmussen, Peter Matson, Roger Bolton

II. Comments from and Discussion with Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Delegates and Alternates Issues

None

III. Comments from the Public

Lee resident and Rest of the River (RoR) Committee Alternate Josh Bloom referenced concerns raised by Lee Alternate Bob Jones at the Executive Committee meeting (held earlier on 7/20, at 4:00 pm) regarding "intentionally misleading" the Town of Lee RoR representatives regarding disclosing information from the RoR Committee's lawyer. Josh said that Rene Wood, present at both Commission meetings and a RoR member, tried to trivialize the emails. After the Attorney General's Office found Open Meeting Law (OML) violations, they got Tom's emails showing that he wanted to mislead the Town of Lee so they would not have essential information. Josh claimed the Executive Committee did not "rebuke his actions or discipline Tom." Josh was traveling in his car and lost his telephone connection.

Paula Chenail, owner of Gould Farm in Adams next to Greylock Glen, shared a map of her family's farm. She is happy that the Regional Transportation Plan 2024-2044 addresses the lack of a shoulder and turnaround on Gould Rd. She wants to remind planners that funding for a connector road from Gould to West Mountain Rd. is needed. She asked that plans be sensitive to the needs of the farm. In 2021 Williams College students documented traffic, illegal parking, and congestion issues. Paula asked if that was considered in the discussion for the plan. Malcolm, the meeting Chair, noted that there would be more discussion on the Regional Transportation Plan later in the meeting, and staff can be asked then.

Tom Matuszko stated that BRPC is complying with public records law requests from Lee residents within the required timeframe.

Gail Ceresia, a Lee resident, tried to fill in for Mr. Bloom. She said the RoR met in Executive Session, excluding some interested parties, and various people have been trying to get minutes. Mr. Matuszko ran meetings and did not let people talk. Many people in Lee are upset with the settlement agreement, do not want the dump, and feel the other four towns (Lenox, Stockbridge, Great Barrington, and Sheffield) are benefiting financially and

bullying Lee. She suggested "the railroad" solution (vs. trucks) for removing PCBs and fears PCB dust can go into the air and threaten the water source. She claims that Rene Wood "has voted against Lee." Gail stated that towns are getting "a lot" of money, and Lee's \$25 million means "absolutely nothing." Gail said Tom Matuszko has collaborated with GE, EPA, and the other four towns. She asked that Josh be permitted to speak again. The meeting Chair decided to continue with the agenda.

IV. Presentation of Executive Committee Actions

There were no questions.

V. Vote to Elect BRPC Officers for FY 2024

The Nominating Committee proposed the following slate of officers for FY 2024:

- Chair: Malcolm Fick, Great Barrington Alternate
- Vice Chair: John Duval, Adams Alternate
- Clerk: Sheila Irvin, Pittsfield Delegate
- Treasurer: Buck Donovan, Lee Delegate

No nominations were made from the floor.

Rene Wood moved to elect the slate of officers as proposed; it was seconded by Sheila Irvin and approved by a roll call vote:

Peter Traub, Malcolm Fick, Dick Roussin, Leanne Yinger, Buck Donovan, Jonathan James, Sheila Irvin, Rene Wood, Christine Rasmussen, Peter Matson, Roger Bolton

VI. Vote to Endorse Committee Chairs and At-Large Executive Committee Member Appointments for FY 2024

The BRPC bylaws require the Commission to approve the Committee Chairs and At-Large Executive Committee members as recommended by the BRPC Chair.

- Environmental Review Committee: Roger Bolton, Williamstown
- Berkshire Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee: Kyle Hanlon, North Adams
- At-Large Executive Committee members: Kyle Hanlon, North Adams, and Sam Haupt, Peru

Rene Wood moved to endorse the Committee Chairs and At-Large Executive Committee member appointments for FY 2024 per the recommendations of the Chair; Shelia Irvin seconded the motion. A roll call vote authorized the endorsement.

Peter Traub, Malcolm Fick, Dick Roussin, Leanne Yinger, Buck Donovan, Jonathan James, Sheila Irvin, Rene Wood, Christine Rasmussen, Peter Matson, Roger Bolton

VII. Vote to Authorize the BRPC Chair to Vote to Approve the 2024 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) at the July 25, 2023 Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Meeting

Nick Russo, Senior Transportation Planner, reviewed the 2024-2044 proposed Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), laying the groundwork for Berkshire County's transportation investments. The document distills data, feedback, and budgets and recommends projects, programs, and activities for planning staff. It must be filed with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for eligibility for federal dollars. The presentation is posted on the [BRPC website](#).

Richard Roussin commented that we need more recreational bike routes vs. commuting, there isn't enough funding to maintain roads, and it must be difficult to estimate costs in the future.

Richard Roussin moved to authorize the BRPC Chair to vote to approve the RTP at the Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting on July 25. Rene Wood seconded the motion. A roll call vote authorized the vote.

Peter Traub, Malcolm Fick, Dick Roussin, Leanne Yinger, Buck Donovan, Jonathan James, Sheila Irvin, Rene Wood, Christine Rasmussen, Peter Matson, Roger Bolton

VIII. Vote to Authorize the BRPC Chair to Vote to Approve the October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) at the July 25, 2023 Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Meeting

Clete Kus, Transportation Program Manager, reviewed the draft Unified Planning Work Program for FY 2024. It establishes the transportation planning work BRPC staff will be involved in for the coming year. Some tasks include Title VI and economic justice, management of the 3C process, traffic and travel data, mapping, pavement management, bicycle and pedestrian studies, safety initiatives, scenic byways, rail expansion, and land use planning. Clete's presentation is on the [BRPC website](#).

In response to an e-bike safety question, Clete said the plan allows for safety education. That could include police departments.

Sheila Irvin moved to authorize the BRPC Chair to vote to approve the UPWP at the Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting on July 25. Buck Donovan seconded the motion. A roll call vote authorized the vote.

Peter Traub, Malcolm Fick, Dick Roussin, Leanne Yinger, Buck Donovan, Jonathan James, Sheila Irvin, Rene Wood, Christine Rasmussen, Peter Matson, Roger Bolton

IX. Authorization for Executive Committee to Act on Behalf of the Commission

BRPC bylaws require Commission members to vote annually, reconfirming the Executive Committee's authorization to act in the name of and on behalf of the Commission. Details on three easy ways to vote by **Friday, August 4**, were described in an attached memo: email response, SurveyMonkey poll, or return the form in the packet. The memo will be sent via email to Delegates.

X. Recruitment to BRPC Committees

An outline of committee opportunities will be shared with Delegates and Alternates. Environmental Review, Regional Issues, and Community Development are especially looking for new members.

XI. Ethics Law Compliance Records

Annually, Commission Delegates, Alternates, and committee members must confirm they are current on their Conflict of Interest Training certificate and acknowledge receipt of the Conflict of Interest Law. Follow up will happen via the same email reminding Delegates to vote on authorizing the Executive Committee to act on behalf of the full Commission.

XII. Economic Development District "Survey" of Commission Members

Laura Brennan explained that Berkshire County sought and received an Economic Development District designation from the federal Economic Development Administration. The designation requires BRPC to report the work backgrounds of Delegates and Alternates to confirm the diversity of experiences and expertise on the Commission. An email with a brief survey will be sent to the Alternates and Delegates.

XIII. Executive Director's Report

A. BRPC Staff Changes and Recognition

Tom announced that Laura Brennan was promoted to BRPC Assistant Director. She will remain as the Economic Development Program Manager as well. She will focus on operations assistance, development and implementation of agency plans and goals, public relations and outreach, and Commission Development.

Based on their recent fine performance, Seth Jenkins, Jaymie Zapata, and Marie Brady have been promoted to Senior Planners.

Also, BRPC has had a strong group of summer interns. Tom thanked Evan Boyle, Michael Keegan, Avery Kolenski, Adam Sussbauer, and Alison Zhang for their helpful efforts.

B. BRPC FY 24 Meeting Schedule

The Executive Committee approved the draft FY 24 schedule at their 7/20, 4:00 pm meeting Chair. Meetings will be sent via Outlook.

XIV. Adjournment

Roger Bolton motioned to adjourn, seconded by Sheila Irvin, and approved by roll call vote. The meeting adjourned at 7:18 pm.

Peter Traub, Peter Traub, Malcolm Fick, Dick Roussin, Leanne Yinger, Buck Donovan, Jonathan James, Sheila Irvin, Rene Wood, Christine Rasmussen, Peter Matson, Roger Bolton