



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Thursday, July 20, 2023

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. Call to Order & Open Meeting Law Statement

Vice Chair Malcolm Fick called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm as 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. He stated that BRPC was not recording the meeting, but they needed to inform him if anyone else was. Josh Bloom stated he was recording the meeting.

II. Roll Call:

Read by Office Administrator Kate Hill Tapia:
John Duval, Chair, Adams Alternate - absent
Malcolm Fick, Vice Chair, Gt Barrington Alternate
Sheila Irvin, Clerk, Pittsfield Delegate
Buck Donovan, Treasurer, Lee Delegate
Rene Wood, Commission Development Committee Chair, Sheffield Alternate
Roger Bolton, Environmental Review Committee Chair, Williamstown Alternate
Kyle Hanlon, At-large, North Adams Delegate
Sam Haupt, At-large, Peru Delegate - absent

Others Present: Christine Rasmussen, Stockbridge Alternate; Bob Jones, Lee Alternate; Josh Bloom; Sean Curran; Jimmy Citizen, Great Barrington; Paula Chenail

Staff Present: Thomas Matuszko, Executive Director; Marianne Sniezek, Office Manager; Kate Hill Tapia, Office Administrator; Laura Brennan, Assistant Director and Economic Development Program Manager

III. Approval of June 1, 2023 Minutes

A correction was presented to the dates in the New Grants and Contracts section under the Executive Director's report: it read 3/31 to 4/27/2023 and should read: 5/1/2023 to 5/24/2023.

Rene Wood moved to approve the corrected June 1, 2023 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Sheila Irvin and approved by a roll call vote from Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, Rene Wood, Roger Bolton, and Kyle Hanlon.

IV. Financial Reports

A. May 24 to June 30, 2023 Expenditures Report

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

B. Accounts Receivable Report/Assessments June 2023

It's the end of the quarter and fiscal year; receivables are in good shape.

C. Line of Credit Report

The line of credit is now \$500,000, and there has been no need to use it.

V. Comments from Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Delegates and Alternates

Bob Jones, Lee Alternate, and Select Board and Rest of the River (RoR) committee member spoke to concerns regarding correspondence between BRPC Executive Director Tom Matuszko and the Rest of the River attorney and the process of receiving public records requests. Bob objected to being characterized as an "opponent" of the Rest of the River agreement and generally feels that BRPC and RoR have marginalized Lee. He is not seeking to rescind the agreement but asking for dialog. Bob is also concerned that the Economic Development plan for Lee does not mention the landfill.

Rene Wood, Sheffield Delegate, Chair of BRPC's Commission Development Committee, and Chair RoR, responded that the joking comment in Tom's email to the RoR attorney regarding misdirecting Lee's attorney was inappropriate and should be noted in his review. She also stated that the RoR conducted fair and viable procedures which did not marginalize Lee and have been upheld by the 1st Circuit Court.

Malcolm Fick, Great Barrington Alternate and BRPC Vice Chair noted that the Executive Committee is not the RoR committee. He asked what action was requested and agreed that the email must be addressed in Tom's review.

Bob responded that full disclosure is important and his concerns aren't just about emails, reiterating the slow response to requests for minutes, the Master Plan and Economic Development Plan not focusing on the "dump," and insists Lee is being marginalized. He is asking that documentation be received "right away" and that it be noted that the Select Board is "very, very displeased."

Tom responded that he regrets the email comment that was made in jest. BRPC is an agent of the RoR committee, and the five communities agreed to the settlement and to support the committee's actions.

Malcom, as Chair of the meeting, said complaints have been noted, and he will move on with the agenda.

VI. Items Requiring Action

A. Authorization for the Executive Director to Enter into

Intergovernmental Agreements and Contracts with Municipalities

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the Executive Director to enter into intergovernmental agreements and contracts for services with municipalities in FY 24.

Rene Wood motioned to authorize the Executive Director to enter into intergovernmental agreements and contracts for services with municipalities in FY 24. Kyle Hanlon seconded it. A roll call vote approved it from Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, Rene Wood, Roger Bolton, and Kyle Hanlon.

B. Authorization for the BRPC Assistant Director Position to be a Signatory on BRPC Checks

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the BRPC Assistant Director position as a signatory on BRPC checks.

Rene Wood motioned to authorize the BRPC Assistant Director position as a signatory on BRPC checks.; Roger Bolton seconded it. A roll call vote approved it from Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, Rene Wood, Roger Bolton, and Kyle Hanlon.

C. Approval (After the Fact) of the Submission of a Grant Application to the Woodlands Partnerships Implementation Grant Program (Regional)

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application and sign any resulting contracts and agreements to the MA EOEAA Woodlands Partnership Implementation Grant program. Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC), in collaboration with partners, will design and implement an indoor educational exhibit highlighting regional climate change impacts, forest-focused solutions, and the value of land conservation for people and wildlife, to be housed within the net-zero Greylock Glen Outdoor Center. \$75,000 is requested, with approximately \$65,000 in direct expenses/subcontracting. There is no match required. The staff lead is Laura Brennan, Assistant Director & Economic Development Program Manager.

Rene Wood motioned to approve submitting a grant application to the MA EOEAA Woodlands Partnership Implementation Grant program for \$75,000; Buck Donovan seconded it. A roll call vote approved it from Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, Rene Wood, Roger Bolton, and Kyle Hanlon.

D. Approval Vote to Approve the Submission of a Grant Application for Funds Provided through the Commonwealth of Massachusetts under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Home and Community-Based Services as Administered by AgeSpan

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application and sign any resulting contracts and agreements for funds provided through the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Home and Community-Based Services as administered by AgeSpan. The Public Health Program's \$25,000 proposal is for the acceleration of age-and dementia-friendly diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) work. There is no match required. The staff lead is Senior Planner Sandra Martin.

Rene Wood motioned to approve submitting a grant application and sign any resulting contracts and agreements for funds provided through the Commonwealth of Massachusetts under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Home and Community-Based Services as administered by AgeSpan for the Public Health Program's age-and dementia-friendly diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) work; Kyle Hanlon seconded it. A roll call vote approved it from Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, Rene Wood, Roger Bolton, and Kyle Hanlon.

VII. Committee Reports and Discussion

A. Transportation Advisory Committee

The TAC met on June 20, 2023, reviewed the FY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) budget, and approved sending it to the MPO for determining a public comment period. The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) was also reviewed, and it was agreed to send the final document to the MPO to announce a 21-day public comment period. Draft minutes are in the packet. The TAC also met on July 18th. Minutes are not yet available.

C. Metropolitan Planning Organization

The MPO met on June 27, 2023 and approved release of the 2023 Coordinated Human Services Transportation (CHST) and 2024 Regional Transportation Plans for 21-day public comment periods. 2023-2027 TIP amendments were approved. Draft minutes of the meeting are in the packet. The next meeting is July 25.

VIII. Executive Director's Report

A. Report on New Contracts/Agreements

New Grants and Contracts received/initiated from 5/26/2023 to 7/14/2023.

- Lee – Master Plan & Open Space and Recreation Plan (Amendment) - \$10,000
- MassCEC – EmPower - \$150,000
- Sandisfield – Green Communities - \$5,920.85
- Berkshire Public Health Alliance – Inspection Services FY24:
 - Dalton - \$12,000
 - Richmond - \$18,533
- Berkshire Public Health Alliance – Public Health Nursing Services FY24:
 - Dalton - \$6,221.44
 - Florida - \$2,310
 - Lanesborough - \$3,907.20
 - New Ashford - \$2,387.50
 - North Adams - \$10,124.16
 - Richmond - \$4,500

- River Run - \$733.33
- Savoy - \$2,310
- Windsor - \$91.88
- Berkshire Gas & National Grid – Mass Save Community First Partnership – Adams & North Adams - \$25,000
- Berkshire Gas, Eversource, & National Grid – Mass Save Community First Partnership – Great Barrington & Lee - \$25,000
- Lanesborough – Shared Economic Development Planner - \$11,000
- Great Barrington – Shared Economic Development Planner - \$25,000
- Lenox – Shared Economic Development Planner - \$20,000
- Berkshire Tomorrow / Milltown – Outdoor Recreation Planning - \$9,800
- Adams – Shared Economic Development Planner - \$10,000
- Berkshire County Boards of Health Association - Support Services - \$11,000
- Lanesborough – Housing Needs Assessment - \$10,000
- Department of Public Health MASS CALL 3B - Substance Misuse Prevention Grant Program - \$500,000
- Department of Public Health - Local Health Support Covid Contact Tracing - \$250,000

Rene asked for more details about the Department of Public Health grants. MASS CALL will support the comprehensive web of activities to prevent and treat substance misuse, including Naloxone distribution, outreach and post recovery; many subcontractors are involved; two BRPC staff are paid through this grant. The COVID Contact Tracing funds are mostly distributed to community partners with health workers serving residents most affected by COVID-19, such as Volunteers in Medicine and Habitat for Humanity. It also supports epidemiology activities tracking (in addition to COVID) influenza and tick and food borne diseases.

Grants and Contracts not received.

Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council - Equity in Emergency Management Consultant for \$65,000. BRPC will consider applying with a reduced scope of work for a cost under \$10,000.

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Food Security Infrastructure Grant (FSIG) to increase community resilience through local food production and distribution. \$50,000 – 100,000.

B. Berkshires Tomorrow Inc. (BTI)

- The BTI Board approved Berkshires Tomorrow Inc. to enter into an agreement with the Milltown Operating Foundation, dba Mill Town Capital, to continue implementing the Berkshire County Outdoor Recreation Plan and authorize the BTI President to sign any agreements. The project will run from July 1 to December 31, 2023, and BTI will

- receive \$10,000. BTI will retain 2% (\$200) and pass \$9,800 to BRPC.
- The BTI Board approved the President to sign Berkshires Tomorrow Inc. and BRPC Software Lease agreement for Subscriptions for Microsoft Office 365 and Microsoft Defender for FY2024 \$18,720.

C. Staff Update

- Open Positions: BRPC has several open positions, including:
 - Transportation Planner
 - Public Health Housing Specialist Berkshire County
 - Public Health Emergency Preparedness Planner
 - Public Health Food Specialist
 - Digital Equity Project Specialist part time
- Approved interns:
 - Elizabeth (Avery) Kolenski – Digital Equity (Resume attached)
 - Alison Zhang – Cultural Districts (Resume attached)
 - Adam Sussbauer – Outdoor Recreation (Resume attached)

Tom noted that this Summer's group of interns has been impressive, and their work is very beneficial to BRPC.
- Promotions:
 - Laura Brennan-Assistant Director
 - Seth Jenkins-Community Planning Senior Planner
 - Marie Brady-Public Health Senior Planner
 - Jaymie Zapata-Public Health Senior Planner
- Recognition for Melissa Provencher, Energy & Environment Program Manager
Letters recognizing Melissa's Brownsfields leadership, success in securing funding, and serving as a national resource were in the packet.
- Sean Curran, Shared Town Administrator Middlefield and Washington
Tom introduced Sean, who started on July 1.

D. Rural Policy Advisory Commission (RPAC) Update

The Rural Policy Advisory Commission met on June 9, 2023, as part of the state's outreach efforts to develop a new statewide Economic Development plan. Secretary Yvonne Hao and Undersecretary Ashley Stolba from the Executive Office of Economic Development attended. Most of the meeting was spent identifying and discussing possible solutions to incorporate into the plan. A copy of the top recommendations was in the meeting packet.

E. Passenger Rail

- West-East Rail - The Special Commission to address West-East Passenger Rail governance and operations should have completed its work by June 30, 2023. However, that deadline was missed. The Commission Co-Chairs announced no new time frame.
- Berkshire Flyer - The Berkshire Flyer has maintained solid ridership numbers.
- Northern Tier Passenger Rail – There was a status briefing on

June 5, 2023 and no additional public activity since then.

F. Brownsfields Update

MassDEP is tentatively planning a Western MA Brownfields Roundtable on September 7th (9:30 am-12 pm). It is intended for municipal employees/officials, property owners, developers and others.

In addition to securing \$2.35 million to supplement the Berkshire Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund, Melissa Provencher, Berkshire Brownfields Program Manager, solved a problem with EPA's grant application software that was then corrected nationally. Please refer to an unsolicited note about Melissa's efforts from EPA.

G. Climate Focused Forestry Initiative

In June, the Administration announced an initiative related to forestry to optimize carbon sequestration, invest in forest conservation, enhance a network of forest reserves, and help develop forest management guidelines while providing incentives for private landowners to maximize the climate benefits of forests. While there are no details yet, this could be promising for private owners of forest lands. See attached press release.

H. Community Climate Bank

In June, the Administration also announced the launch of the Massachusetts Community Climate Bank to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the building sector, focusing on the affordable housing market. See attached press release.

VIII. Old Business

A. No Old Business to Discuss

IX. New Business

A. BRPC FY 24 Meeting Schedule

Rene Wood motioned to approve the proposed FY 24 meeting schedule; Roger Bolton seconded it and a roll call vote approved it: Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, Rene Wood, Roger Bolton, and Kyle Hanlon.

B. Kusik Award

The Kusik Award is a BRPC award for recognition of outstanding planning efforts. The Committee agreed the award has value and to solicit ideas for awardees. To be determined if there is an annual meeting or alternate venue to hand out the award. Suggestions for awardees can be emailed to tmatuszko@berkshireplanning.org.

C. BRPC Annual Meeting

The Committee asked staff to recommend ideas for an annual meeting and agreed not to combine it with a full Commission meeting—potential dates: 10/5 and 11/30. Concern was mentioned about a new COVID-19 strand

coming in the fall. Ann Gobi, Director of Rural Affairs, expressed interest in meeting with the Commission.

D. September Commission Meeting

Potential topics:

- Housing Code changes
- Meet with the Governor's Western Mass Director, Kristen Elechko
- Rail updates
- State budget

E. Executive Director Performance Review

BRPC's Bylaws require "On an annual basis, the Executive Director shall prepare a review of his/her accomplishments for the preceding year and goals for the upcoming years as part of his/her performance evaluation by the Executive Committee." This is planned for the September meeting.

F. Executive Director Position Description

BRPC's Bylaws also require "A written description of the responsibilities of the position of the Executive Director shall be prepared by the Executive Committee. At least every five years, the position description shall be reviewed and updated jointly by the Executive Committee and the Executive Director as necessary. In consultation with the Executive Director, the duties of the Executive Director may be modified by the Commission upon a majority vote of those voting at a regularly scheduled Commission meeting." Tom recently had his 5th anniversary as Executive Director, the last time the position description was reviewed. A copy of the position description was in the packet. They must go to the full Commission for approval if modifications are made.

Roger Bolton moved to approve the Executive Director position description with no changes; Rene Wood seconded and it was approved by a roll call vote: Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, Rene Wood, Roger Bolton, and Kyle Hanlon.

The Assistant Director position description will be sent to the Committee. The focus is on public outreach, Commission development, and agency operations.

X. Adjournment

Roger Bolton motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:09 pm, seconded by Rene Wood, and unanimously approved by a roll call vote: Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, Rene Wood, Roger Bolton, and Kyle Hanlon.

Attachments:

- Unapproved Minutes of the June 1, 2023, BRPC Executive Committee Meeting
- May 15 to June 30, 2023 Expenditures Report
- Accounts Receivable Reports – June 2023

- June Line of Credit Report
- Executive Director's Memorandum
- Transportation Advisory Committee Draft Minutes June 20, 2023
- Metropolitan Planning Organization Draft Minutes June 27, 2023
- Avery Kolenski Resume
- Adam Sussbauer Resume
- Alison Zhang Resume
- Rural Policy Advisory Commission Economic Development Priorities
- Email D. Parr
- Governor Healey Press release – Climate Focused Forestry Initiative
- Governor Healey Press release – Community Climate Bank
- BRPC Meeting Schedule FY2024 Draft
- Executive Director's Position Description
- June Technical Assistance Memo