



# BRPC

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

1 Fenn Street, Suite 201  
Pittsfield, MA 01201  
T: (413) 442-1521 · F: (413) 442-1523  
TTY: 771 or (800) 439-2370  
berkshireplanning.org

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Thursday, September 7, 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**

Chair Malcolm Fick called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. 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 recording the meeting, and anyone else who wanted to record it needed to inform him.

### **II. Roll Call:**

Read by Office Administrator Kate Hill Tapia:

Malcolm Fick, Chair, Gt Barrington Alternate

John Duval, Vice Chair, Adams Alternate – arrived at 5:02

Sheila Irvin, Clerk, Pittsfield Delegate

Buck Donovan, Treasurer, Lee Delegate

Rene Wood, Commission Development Committee Chair, Sheffield Alternate

– left at 4:38

Roger Bolton, Environmental Review Committee Chair, Williamstown Alternate

Kyle Hanlon, At-large, North Adams Delegate

Sam Haupt, At-large, Peru Delegate - absent

Others Present: Doug McNally, Windsor Alternate

Staff Present: Thomas Matuszko, Executive Director; Marianne Sniezek, Office Manager; Kate Hill Tapia, Office Administrator; Mark Maloy, GIS, Data & Information Program Manager

### **III. Approval of July 20, 2023 Minutes**

Rene Wood moved to approve the July 20, 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, and Roger Bolton.

### **IV. Financial Reports**

#### **A. July 1 to September 1, 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 August 31, 2023**

In good shape, nothing too outstanding.

**C. Line of Credit Report**

There has been no need to use it.

**V. Comments from Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Delegates and Alternates**

Rene Wood requested that the Executive Director's review be moved up in the agenda so she may participate before leaving the meeting early for another meeting.

**VI. Items Requiring Action**

**A. Vote to Approve (after the fact) a Response to a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to the Massachusetts Broadband Institute for Outreach and Engagement Services to Support Digital Equity Statewide Plans / RFQ No. 2023-MBI-09**

Rene Wood motioned to approve (after the fact) a response to a request for qualifications to the Massachusetts Broadband Institute for Outreach and Engagement Services to Support Digital Equity Statewide Plans in Berkshire County. Kyle Hanlon seconded it. A roll call vote approved it from Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, Rene Wood, Roger Bolton, and Kyle Hanlon.

Compliments were shared for Wylie Goodman, Senior Economic Planner, for her patience and perseverance in coordinating and managing this work.

**B. Vote to Approve (after the fact) a Grant Application to the Massachusetts Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS) Related to Mobile Addiction Services**

Rene Wood motioned to authorize the Executive Director (after the fact) to submit a grant application to the MA Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS) related to Mobile Addiction Services and to sign any resulting contracts and agreements. BRPC's Berkshire Overdose Addiction Prevention Collaborative (BOAPC) will use this to extend and expand the Berkshire Post Overdose Program (BPOP). 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 Vote to Approve (after the fact) an Application to the Advancing Equity in Aging Funding Opportunity with the NextFifty Initiative**

Rene Wood motioned to authorize the Executive Director (after the fact) to apply to the Advancing Equity in Aging Funding Opportunity with the NextFifty Initiative and sign any resulting contracts and agreements. Sheila Irvin seconded it. A roll call vote approved it from Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, Rene Wood, Roger Bolton, and Kyle Hanlon.

**D. Vote to Approve a New BRPC Written Information Security Policy (WISP)**

Rene Wood motioned to approve the new BRPC Written Information Security Policy (WISP) to create effective administrative, technical, and physical safeguards for protecting Personally Identifiable Information (PII); Sheila Irvin seconded it. A roll call vote approved it from Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, Rene Wood, Roger Bolton, and Kyle Hanlon.

GIS, Data & Information Program Manager Mark Maloy explained that due to the CEDAC Home Improvement Loan Program, BRPC must have this policy since personal identifying information (PII) is collected for loan applications.

**E. Vote to Approve a Revised Use of the Internet and Communications Systems, Including Phones & Cell Phones Policy**

Rene Wood motioned to approve the revised Use of the Internet and Communications Systems policy, including phones & cell phones, originally adopted on 11/07/2013. Per the new WISP policy, staff are not allowed to use BRPC equipment and emails for personal use due to security. Kyle Hanlon seconded it. A roll call vote approved it from Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, Rene Wood, Roger Bolton, and Kyle Hanlon.

**F. Vote to Approve and Accept (after the fact) a Grant Application to the MIIA Wellness Program**

Rene Wood motioned to approve the Executive Director to (after the fact) submit and accept a \$5,000 grant application to the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association (MIIA) Wellness grant program and approve any resulting contracts and agreements. Roger Bolton seconded it. A roll call vote approved it from Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, Rene Wood, Roger Bolton, and Kyle Hanlon.

**G. Vote to Approve (after the fact) a Grant application to the Partnership Planning Program under the Economic Development Administration (EDA)**

Rene Wood motioned to authorize the Executive Director to submit a \$70,000 application and sign any resulting contracts and agreements to the EDA's Partnership Planning grant program for 2023-2027 Berkshire County CEDS implementation. Sheila Irvin seconded it. A roll call vote approved it from Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, Rene Wood, Roger Bolton, and Kyle Hanlon.

Tom noted that Laura Brennan was given very little notice about this opportunity, and in the end, the grant was submitted (at EDA's request since

they had funds to distribute) for a three-year project of \$210,000 with a 1:1 match using in-kind services.

## **VII. Committee Reports and Discussion**

### **A. Transportation Advisory Committee**

The TAC met on July 18, 2023, and recommended the MPO endorse the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). MassDOT presented on the MA Vehicle Census data about vehicle travel in the state. FY 2023 TIP project updates were shared. Draft minutes were distributed in the meeting packet. There are no meetings in August or September.

### **C. Metropolitan Planning Organization**

The MPO met on July 25, 2023. John Boyle was elected Vice Chair. The 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and 2024 Regional Transportation Plans were endorsed. Draft minutes were in the packet. There are no August or September meetings.

See Old Business. The Executive Director's review was moved up in the agenda.

## **VIII. Executive Director's Report**

### **A. Report on New Contracts/Agreements**

New Grants and Contracts received/initiated from 7/15 to 7/31/2023.

- Berkshire United Way - Berkshire Benchmarks - \$10,000
- Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) – Emergency Preparedness Planning - \$162,158
- Boston Medical Center - Pittsfield Fiscal Agent HEALING Communities \$248,582
- Berkshire Public Health Alliance – Inspection Services FY24:
  - Lanesborough - \$33,300
  - Williamstown - \$75/hr, quarterly
- Berkshire Public Health Alliance – Public Health Nursing Services FY24:
  - Egremont - \$2,468.24
  - Windsor MAVEN - \$1,010.68
- USDOT – Comprehensive Safety Action Plan - \$198,593

Grants and Contracts not received.

BRPC did not receive the US Environmental Protection Agency Healthy Communities Grant Program grant. The maximum available was \$150,000. There will be a debrief with the EPA about the application.

### **B. Berkshires Tomorrow Inc. (BTI)**

- The BTI Board accepted \$25,000 in donations from community partners to support the Berkshire Benchmarks initiative and authorized the BTI President to sign any contracts. Donations began August 1, 2023.

- The BTI Board approved the President to sign/submit a \$10,000 grant application to the Health New England Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging (DEIB) Grant Program and to sign any resulting contracts and agreements. BRPC's Berkshire Overdose Addiction Prevention Collaborative (BOAPC) will use this to extend the Community Outreach Specialist initiative launched as part of the HEALing Communities Study, whose funding ends on 12/31/23. The initiative focuses on learning more from local young adults (ages 19-25) not engaged in college full time about their experiences with substance use and self-perceived risk of overdose and to work with these community members to provide education and connection to resources. This grant will be a collaborative project between Berkshires Tomorrow, The George B. Crane Memorial Center, Berkshire Health Systems, The City of Pittsfield, and other community partners involved in BOAPC. There is no match required.
- BTI Board approved the President to sign an agreement with Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and any other contracts for vaccine clinic support not exceeding \$10,000, including a 2% administrative fee.
- The BTI Board will meet September 7, 2023, to approve the Yearly Election of Officers and annual update of documents.

### **C. Staff Update**

- Accepted Positions
  - Matthew Bryan - Public Health Emergency Preparedness Senior Planner
  - Ryan Griffis – Transportation Planner
  - Robert Ireland – Lead for America Fellowship
  - Daniel Hassett - Public Health Housing Specialist Berkshire County
- Accepted Interns:
  - Terra Lim – Digital Equity Intern, paid
- Open Positions:
  - Public Health Food Specialist
  - Community Engagement Specialist – Digital Equity (part-time temporary)
- Award Nominations:
  - Laura Kittross – Berkshire 25 recognition from Berkshire Magazine (TBD fall of 2023)
  - HEALing Communities/Andy Ottoson – 1Berkshire "Celebrate the Berkshires" Trendsetter award nomination (event 9/14)

### **D. Rural Policy Advisory Commission (RPAC) Update**

The RPAC did not meet in July or August. The next meeting is scheduled for September 8, 2023. The FY23 Annual Report was in this meeting's packet.

### **E. Passenger Rail**

- West-East Rail - The Special Commission to address West-East

Passenger Rail governance and operations was supposed to have completed its work by June 30, 2023. However, that deadline was missed, and no new time frame was announced.

- Berkshire Flyer - The Berkshire Flyer has maintained solid ridership numbers. Delays caused by CSX, who owns the rail line, have impacted on-time performance.
- Northern Tier Passenger Rail – No recent activity.

#### **F. ADA Coordinator**

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires public entities with 50 or more employees to publicly designate at least one responsible employee to coordinate ADA compliance. BRPC must also administer and write a self-evaluation of the programmatic barriers in services offered by BRPC; establish a complaint or grievance procedure to respond to complaints of noncompliance from the public, develop a transition plan if structural changes are necessary for achieving program accessibility; and retain the self-evaluation for three years. Assistant Director Laura Brennan has been designated the BRPC ADA Coordinator.

#### **G. 2023 Community Health Equity Survey**

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) is conducting a statewide community health equity survey to enable DPH to improve its Programs make decisions about funding and resources and support policies to improve health inequities. The anonymous survey is available through early fall 2023. It takes approximately 15 to 25 minutes to complete and can be accessed at <https://www.mass.gov/chei>.

#### **H. Division of Local Services / Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies Regionalization Conference**

Save the date – Tuesday, October 10, 2023 – for the Division of Local Services(DLS) / Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies (MARPA) Regionalization Conference. For several years, the state's Regional Planning Agencies have teamed up with the DLS in the Department of Revenue to sponsor a regionalization / shared services conference.

#### **I. Moving Together 2023 Conference**

[MassDOT's Moving Together Conference](#) will be held at the Sheraton Boston Hotel on October 4, 2023.

### **VIII. Old Business**

#### **A. Vote on Executive Director FY 23 Performance Review and FY 24 Salary**

Roger Bolton motioned to approve the Executive Director's FY 23 performance review with an exceptional merit increase of 3% and the FY 24 \$3,000 salary adjustment (previously approved for all staff) retro to July 1, 2023. Kyle Hanlon seconded it, and a roll call vote approved it: Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, Rene Wood, Roger Bolton, and Kyle Hanlon.

The Executive Committee thanked Tom for his excellent work and professionalism, even in the face of personal attacks. Also noted there was an inappropriate email to an attorney in connection with Rest of River committee business that Tom apologized for, and all are sure won't happen again. Tom thanked the members for their support.

**B. BRPC Annual Meeting Update**

BRPC's Annual Meeting is scheduled for October 5, 2023, at the Berkshire Hills County Club. With only nine non-staff registered, a decision will be made on 9/21 if there are enough participants to have the event. Ideally, 40-50 registrants are wanted. It was noted that the Selectmen's Association is not active.

**C. Vote to Act on the Kusik Award**

Nominations were reviewed.

Kyle Hanlon motioned to give the Kusik Award to Ilana Steinhauer, FNP, Executive Director, Volunteers in Medicine. Roger Bolton seconded it, and a roll call vote approved it: Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, Roger Bolton, and Kyle Hanlon.

**IX. New Business**

**A. Citizen Planner Training Collaborative (CPTC) Fall Webinar Series FY 24 Meeting Schedule**

Each RPA will help organize a webinar between late October through December (even early January). A list of possible topics was distributed and discussed. Let CJ Hoss, the Community Planning Program Manager, know if you have topic suggestions.

**B. September 21 Commission Meeting**

The following potential topics were discussed:

- Census 2020 presentation
- Roles and Responsibilities of Delegates and Alternates for new and a refresher for older Delegates and Alternates
- Energy aggregation changes – comment letter
- Cannabis host agreements – comment letter

**X. Adjournment**

Roger Bolton motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:07 p.m., seconded by Kyle Hanlon, and unanimously approved by a roll call vote: Malcolm Fick, John Duval, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, Roger Bolton, and Kyle Hanlon.

**Attachments:**

- Unapproved Minutes of the July 20, 2023, BRPC Executive Committee Meeting
- July 1 to September 1, 2023 Expenditures Report
- Accounts Receivable Report – August 2023
- Line of Credit Report

- Executive Director's Memorandum
- Written Information Security Policy – Draft
- Use of the Internet and Communications Systems Policy - Draft
- Transportation Advisory Committee Draft Minutes July 18, 2023
- Metropolitan Planning Organization Draft Minutes July 25, 2023
- Richard Ireland, Digital Equity Fellow, Resume
- Resumes, Mathew Bryan, Ryan Griffis, Robert Ireland, Terra Lim
- Rural Policy Advisory Commission FY 23 Annual Report
- CPTC Webinar topic Description Fall 2023
- July Technical Assistance Memo