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## **MEETING NOTICE**

There will be a meeting of the  
BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION  
on Thursday, January 18, 2024 at **7:00 p.m.**

This will be 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.

To participate virtually join Zoom meeting at  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86531428272?pwd=ejM0M0x5OVQ5bkRuMVIKb3NoSlpDdz09>  
Meeting ID: 865 3142 8272, Passcode: 676426 Phone: 646.558.8656, 301.715.8592, 312.626.6799

**Meeting Materials** are posted at [www.berkshireplanning.org](http://www.berkshireplanning.org). Click on the meeting in the Events Calendar to open them.

### **Agenda**

(All times approximate)

- I. Opening (7:00-7:05)**  
*A. Call to Order and Open Meeting Law Statement*  
*B. Roll Call of Commission Members Attending the Meeting*  
*C. Vote to Approve Minutes of the November 16, 2023 Full Commission Meeting*
- II. Comments from and Discussion with Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Delegates and Alternates Issues (7:05-7:10)**  
*Delegates and Alternates may bring up any issue not on the agenda for discussion. Any possible action will be referred to a future meeting.*
- III. Comments from the Public (7:10-7:15)**  
*Members of the public may offer comments regarding topics on the agenda or other matters they wish to bring to the Commission's attention. Comments are to be directed to the Commission. Commenters must state their names and the city or town they are from.*
- IV. Presentation of Executive Committee Actions (7:15-7:20)**  
*Executive Committee actions taken on the Commission's behalf at its December 7, 2023 and January 4, 2024 meetings are presented for discussion.*
- V. Vote to Amend the BRPC Bylaws (7:20-7:30)**  
*The BRPC Commission Development Committee has recommended the BRPC Bylaws be amended to allow BRPC Officers and Committee members to serve for two year terms instead of one year. This amendment requires a two-thirds vote of Delegates or Alternates attending a Commission meeting.*
- VI. Presentation on and Discussion of the Commonwealth's Economic Development Plan (7:30-8:00)**  
*In December, the Healey administration released the state's economic development plan "Team Massachusetts: Leading Future Generations". The plan, [Economic Development Plan | Mass.gov](#), reflects a vision for Massachusetts organized around three main priority areas, Fundamentals, Talent, and Sectors. We will have a presentation of the Plan.*

**VII. Discussion on Educational/Informational Emphasis of the Commission (8:00-8:10)**

*The BRPC Commission Development Committee is seeking input from Delegates and Alternates about future educational/information efforts the Commission should undertake.*

**VIII. Presentation of the Berkshires Outside Website (8:10-8:25)**

*We will have a presentation on the Berkshires Outside website <https://berkshiresoutside.org>, which is one-stop shopping for all things outdoor recreation in the Berkshires, which includes information about hiking, from wildlife conservation properties to state parks, as well as a full range of other activities, such as boating, skiing, hunting, mountain biking, and road cycling, plus adventure parks, golf courses, and sports courts.*

**IX. Executive Directors' Report (8:25-8:30)**

*The Executive Director is available to discuss items in his report*

**X. Adjournment (8:30)**

Other interested citizens and officials are invited to attend.

All times listed are estimates of when specific agenda items may be discussed.

City and Town Clerks: Please post this notice



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## **DRAFT FULL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES** **November 16, 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 7:01 pm.**

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.

#### **B. Roll Call**

The following Commission members were present:

Peter Traub – Cheshire Delegate  
Caleb Darcy – Dalton Delegate  
Mary McGurn – Egremont Delegate  
Malcolm Fick – Great Barrington Alternate  
Leanne Yinger – Lanesborough Delegate  
Buck Donovan – Lee Delegate  
Laura Mensi – Monterey Delegate  
Keith Torrico – Mount Washington Delegate  
Kyle Hanlon – North Adams Delegate  
Sheila Irvin – Pittsfield, Delegate  
Sari Hoy – Sheffield Delegate  
Rene Wood – Sheffield Alternate  
Christine Rasmussen – Stockbridge Alternate  
Don Gagnon – Washington, Delegate  
Cory Campbell – Williamstown Delegate  
Roger Bolton – Williamstown Alternate  
Doug McNally – Windsor Delegate

Towns with no Delegate or Alternate present:

Adams, Alford, Becket, Clarksburg, Florida, Hancock, Hinsdale, Lenox, New Ashford, New Marlborough, Otis, Peru, Richmond, Sandisfield, Savoy, Tyringham, West Stockbridge

Staff Present:

Thomas Matuszko, Kate Hill Tapia, Laura Brennan, Mark Maloy, CJ Hoss

Others Present:

PCTV, iBerkshires Brittany Polito, Kristen Elechko, Jonathan Schrag, Kwit iPhone

**C. Approval of September 21, 2023 Minutes**

Sheila Irvin moved to approve the September 21, 2023, draft meeting minutes, with the correction that Pittsfield was not represented; Pedro Pachano seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The minutes were approved with a roll call vote with Peter Traub, Malcolm Fick, Leanne Yinger, Buck Donovan, Laura Mensi, Christine Rasmussen, and Doug McNally voting to approve.

Abstained: Kyle Hanlon, Sheila Irvin, Sari Hoy, Don Gagnon, Cory Campbell

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

None

**III. Comments from the Public**

None

**IV. Discussion with Western Massachusetts Director of the Office of Governor Healey, Kristen Elechko**

Kristen Elechko discussed the Healey administration's priorities of affordability, equity and climate and invited input on what support municipalities need. She schedules events for the Governor and Lt. Governor and stands in when they are not available. She may be contacted at:

[Kristen.elechko@mass.gov](mailto:Kristen.elechko@mass.gov)

Discussion included the inadequacy of PILOT and the need to fully fund Chapter 90 without requiring grant applications. It was noted that there is \$25 million going to rural roads and bridges, and allocation would be fairer based on miles of roads vs. population. Kristen will get back to Tom so he may share how that will be allocated.

Kristen asked for participation in the public comment opportunity on the Commonwealth's Digital Equity Plan led by the Massachusetts Broadband Institute. [BRPC is hosting two Zoom events to collect comments](#): November 30, noon, and December 5, 6:30 pm.

Hiring and maintaining staff for municipalities has been identified as a need. Jonathan Schrag pointed out that federal Inflation Reduction Act money has been earmarked to help towns with grant writing.

Laura Brennan shared the following link to register for Massachusetts Federal Funds Partnership meetings; the next one is Tuesday, November 28, they are scheduled through February 2024.

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/federal-funds-information-for-local-governments>

**V. Presentation of Population Projections**

BRPC GIS, Data and IT Manager Mark Maloy provided an overview of

population projections based on the 2020 decennial census results. Berkshire County needs at least 650 people to come to or stay to maintain the current population level. There has not been an analysis of the potential impact of climate change. The data may be found at this [link](#).

**VI. Discussion of the District Local Technical Assistance Program (DLTA) and the District Local Technical Assistance – Augmentation (DLTA-A) Program**

BRPC Community Planning Program Manager CJ Hoss discussed the DLTA and DLTA-A programs for 2024 (assuming the Legislature funds them) that can provide BRPC staff assistance to communities for various planning needs. DLTA-Augmentation is newer funding that allows BRPC to provide grant writing services. CJ and Tom are happy to discuss ways BRPC staff can support towns via these funds. Details will be sent via email next week. There is an application; decisions are made in February or March. [choss@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:choss@berkshireplanning.org)

**VII. Discussion on Priority Topics for the Commonwealth's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant**

Jonathan E. Schrag, Deputy Climate Chief & Director of Investment for Decarbonization and Resilience from the Governor's Office of Climate Innovation and Resilience, asked for input on priorities for the Berkshires as the Commonwealth prepares a federal Climate Pollution Reduction Grant application. April 1 is the application deadline. Action plans are due March 1.

The Commonwealth is pursuing three types of applications (and likely focus): statewide (decarbonization of school buildings), regional (offshore wind power development), and coalition partnerships (medium and heavy vehicle replacements), each at different funding levels as identified by the federal government.

Jonathan will participate in the November 28 Federal Funds Partnership municipal call mentioned previously. Reach out to Jonathan with more input, invitations or follow up: [jonathan.schrag@mass.gov](mailto:jonathan.schrag@mass.gov).

Commission members suggested addressing municipal aggregation, level 3 compatible vehicle chargers, and hydrogen vs. electric batteries.

**VIII. Presentation of Executive Committee Actions**

There were no questions or comments on the Executive Committee actions taken on the Commission's behalf at its October 7 and November 2, 2023 meetings.

**IX. Vote to Endorse Committee Chair for FY 2024**

The BRPC bylaws require the Commission to approve Committee Chairs as recommended by the BRPC Chair. Christine Rasmussen, Stockbridge Alternate, was recommended as Chair for the Regional Issues Committee.

Roger Bolton moved to ratify Christine Rasmussen as the Chair of the Regional Issues Committee. Doug McNally seconded the motion. A roll call vote authorized the appointment.

Peter Traub, Caleb Dary, Mary McGurn, Malcolm Fick, Leanne Yinger, Buck Donovan, Laura Mensi, Keith Toricco, Sheila Irvin, Sari Hoy, Doug McNally

Abstained: Christine Rasmussen, Cory Campbell

**X. Vote to Approve Community Assessments for FY 2025**

By law, BRPC must notify municipalities of their assessments by February to include them in city/town budgets. This decision is being made earlier to help with municipal budget preparation. The BRPC Finance Committee met on November 13, 2023 and recommended a 2.5% increase in the assessment rate for a new rate per resident of .87260.

Doug McNally moved to approve a 2.5% increase in the FY 2024 Assessment rate for FY 2025. Sheila Irvin seconded the motion. A roll call vote authorized the new FY 2025 Assessments.

Peter Traub, Caleb Dary, Mary McGurn, Malcolm Fick, Leanne Yinger, Buck Donovan, Laura Mensi, Keith Toricco, Sheila Irvin, Sari Hoy, Christine Rasmussen, Don Gagnon, Doug McNally

Abstained: Cory Campbell

**XI. Executive Director's Report**

**A. Citizen Planner Training Collaborative Fall Webinar Series**

Tom encouraged registration for the Citizen Planner Training Collaborative's (CPTC) first Western Mass in-person half-day conference on **Saturday, December 2, 2023** in Greenfield, MA, from 8:30 – 12:30.

*The conference may be canceled if there are not enough participants.*

Attendees will be able to choose two sessions:

- Roles & Responsibilities of Planning Boards and Zoning Boards of Appeals
- Creating Master Plans
- Drafting Zoning Amendments
- Special Permits & Variances

Preregistration is required at <https://bit.ly/west-conf-2023>

**XII. Adjournment**

Doug McNally motioned to adjourn, seconded by Sheila Irvin, and approved by roll call vote. The meeting adjourned at 8:44 pm.

Peter Traub, Caleb Dary, Mary McGurn, Malcolm Fick, Leanne Yinger, Buck Donovan, Laura Mensi, Keith Toricco, Sheila Irvin, Sari Hoy, Christine Rasmussen, Doug McNally

Abstained: Cory Campbell



# BRPC

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

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

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Delegates and Alternates, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission  
FROM: Thomas Matuszko, Executive Director  
DATE: January 10, 2023  
SUBJ: Executive Committee Actions for December 7, 2023 and January 4, 2024

Per the bylaws, actions taken by the Executive Committee on the Commission's behalf are reported and presented for discussion at the next Commission meeting. The Executive Committee took the following actions at the December and January Executive Committee meetings.

### **Executive Committee Actions on December 7, 2023**

**Approved the minutes of the November 2, 2023, BRPC Executive Committee meeting**

**Approved the October 19 to November 30, 2023 Expenditures Report**

**Approved Submission of a Grant Application to the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security's Municipal Cybersecurity Awareness Grant Program**

The Executive Committee approved submission of a grant application to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Technology Services and Security's Municipal Cybersecurity Awareness Grant program for free cybersecurity training for BRPC employees in 2024.

**Approved Changes to the BRPC Personnel Pay Plan to Add a Public Health Social Worker Position and Change the Pay Range of the Public Health Nurse Position**

The Executive Committee approved changes to the BRPC Personnel Pay Plan to add a Public Health Social Worker position and change the pay range of the Public Health Nurse Position.

**Approved Submission of Comments on the NSTAR WT-02 Transmission Right-of-Way Reliability Program (TRRP) Project, Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), Hancock, Lanesborough, Cheshire, Dalton, and Hinsdale to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office (MEPA)**

The Executive Committee authorized the Executive Director to submit comments to

MEPA on the Draft Environmental Report (DEIR) on the E131 Asset Condition Refurbishment Project in Adams, North Adams, Florida, and Monroe submitted by the New England Power Company.

**Approved Comments on the Massachusetts Internet for All Plan to the Massachusetts Broadband Institute**

The Executive Committee approved the comments to the Massachusetts Broadband Institute on the Massachusetts Internet for All Plan.

**Executive Committee Actions on January 4, 2024**

**Approved the minutes of the December 7, 2023, BRPC Executive Committee meeting**

**Approved the December 1 to 27, 2023, Expenditures Report**

**Approved Changes to the BRPC Personal, Family, and Medical Leave Policy to Allow for a Paid Leave Option**

The Executive Committee approved changes to the BRPC Personal, Family, and Medical Leave Policy to allow for up to a 12-week paid leave option for employees who have worked at BRPC for at least one year. Effective January 1, 2024.

**Approved Submission of a Grant Application to the Rural Health Network Development Planning Program in the Health Resources and Administration (HRSA) Federal Office of Rural Health Policy**

The Executive Committee approved the submission of a Rural Health Network Planning grant application and the signing of any resulting contracts and agreements to the Health Resources and Administration (HRSA) Federal Office of Rural Health Policy.

**Approved Entering into a Contract with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council Related to the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation MassTrails Grant Program**

The Executive Committee authorized the Executive Director to sign any contracts and agreements with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council related to its Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation MassTrails grant program.



**PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENTS**  
**RE: TERMS OF OFFICE AND COMMITTEE PARTICIPATION/APPOINTMENTS**

**Current text pertaining to officer positions** *(beginning on page 2 of BRPC's Bylaws):*

D. Commission Organization

- D.1. Each year at the first meeting after July 1, but to be held no later than August 31<sup>st</sup>, the Commission shall elect from among its membership a Chair, Vice Chair, Clerk, and Treasurer. If any of these positions becomes vacant, the Commission shall elect at its next meeting a delegate or alternate to fill the position until the next annual election. To ensure continuity of operation, the Chair, Vice-Chair, Clerk, and Treasurer shall be eligible to continue to serve in that capacity, until the first meeting after July 1, even though they may no longer be an elected member of a planning or community development board or have been appointed as an alternate by the city or town.

**Current text pertaining to nominating of officers by the Commission Development Committee** *(beginning on page 5 of BRPC's Bylaws):*

- D.10.2. The Commission Development Committee shall consist of at least four (4) members. It shall consider Commission education, membership, structure, and process, including periodic evaluation of the performance of the Commission. Periodically, the Committee shall also review the Commission's bylaws to determine whether amendments are needed to enhance the operations of the Commission.

A nominating subcommittee of the Committee, comprised only of delegates and alternates and consisting of at least three members, shall recommend a slate of officer candidates for the next fiscal year. Such slate of candidates shall reflect the Commission's desire to rotate officers and be representative of all areas of the region. Such slate shall be provided to delegates and alternates at least 14 days prior to the first meeting after July 1 of each year.

**Proposed Revisions:**

D. Commission Organization

- D.1. **Positions of Chair, Vice Chair, Clerk, and Treasurer shall be filled for two-year terms. During election years,** at the first meeting after July 1, but to be held no later than August 31<sup>st</sup>, the Commission shall elect from among its membership a Chair, Vice Chair, Clerk, and Treasurer. If any of these positions become vacant, the Commission shall elect at its next meeting a delegate or alternate to fill the position until the next **bi-annual** election. To ensure continuity of operation, the Chair, Vice-Chair, Clerk, and Treasurer shall be eligible to continue to serve in that capacity until the first meeting after July 1 **of their second year holding an officer position**, even though they may no longer be an elected member of a planning or community development board or have been appointed as an alternate by the city or town.

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- D.10.2. The Commission Development Committee shall consist of at least four (4) members. It shall consider Commission education, membership, structure,

and process, including periodic evaluation of the performance of the Commission. Periodically, the Committee shall also review the Commission's bylaws to determine whether amendments are needed to enhance the operations of the Commission.

A nominating subcommittee of the Committee, comprised only of delegates and alternates and consisting of at least three members, shall recommend a slate of officer candidates for the next fiscal year. Such slate of candidates shall reflect the Commission's desire to rotate officers and be representative of all areas of the region. Such slate shall be provided to delegates and alternates at least 14 days prior to the first meeting after July 1 of every other year.

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**Current text pertaining to committee appointments** (*beginning on page 3 of BRPC's Bylaws*):

- D.8. The Commission may establish at any time special and standing committees, which are empowered to make recommendations to the Executive Committee and the Commission. The members of such committees and their duties shall be clearly defined and recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which such a committee is authorized. Each committee shall establish operating practices, keep minutes, and report their recommendations to the Commission or Executive Committee, as appropriate. Each committee shall have a chair, who shall be a delegate or alternate, appointed by the Commission Chair, subject to approval by the Commission, except that the Commission Chair shall serve as Executive Committee chair. To ensure continuity of committee operations, except for the Executive Committee, if a committee chair position becomes vacant, the committee vice-chair shall assume the position of committee chair. If no vice-chair exists, the Executive Director may serve as interim chair until a new chair is appointed and approved. The Commission Chair, in consultation with the committee chair, shall appoint members of committees. Non-Commission members may be appointed to any committee, except the Executive Committee, when their participation would enhance the activities of a particular committee. Such non-Commission members shall be full voting members of the committee to which they are named, but they shall not make up a majority of the membership of any committee. The Commission may exempt this requirement. To ensure continuity of operation, committee members shall be eligible to continue to serve in that capacity until the first meeting after July 1, even though they may no longer be an elected member of a planning or community development board or have been appointed as an alternate by the city or town.

**Proposed Revision:**

- D.8. The Commission may establish at any time special and standing committees, which are empowered to make recommendations to the Executive Committee and the Commission. The members of such committees and their duties shall be clearly defined and recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which such a committee is authorized. Each committee shall establish operating practices, keep minutes, and report their recommendations to the Commission or Executive Committee, as appropriate. Each committee shall have a chair, who shall be a delegate or alternate, appointed by the Commission Chair, subject to approval by the Commission, except that the Commission Chair shall serve as Executive Committee chair. To ensure continuity of committee operations, except for the Executive Committee, if a

committee chair position becomes vacant, the committee vice-chair shall assume the position of committee chair. If no vice-chair exists, the Executive Director may serve as interim chair until a new chair is appointed and approved. The Commission Chair, in consultation with the committee chair, shall appoint members of committees. Non-Commission members may be appointed to any committee, except the Executive Committee, when their participation would enhance the activities of a particular committee. Such non-Commission members shall be full voting members of the committee to which they are named, but they shall not make up a majority of the membership of any committee. The Commission may exempt this requirement. To ensure continuity of operation, committee members shall be eligible to continue to serve in that capacity until the first meeting after July 1 of their second year of committee service, even though they may no longer be an elected member of a planning or community development board or have been appointed as an alternate by the city or town.



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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Delegates & Alternates  
FROM: Thomas Matuszko, Executive Director  
DATE: January 12, 2023  
SUBJ: January 18, 2023, Commission Meeting

### A. District Local Technical Assistance

This is a reminder that District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Applications are due by Friday January 26, 2024. The submission of an application, approved by the Select Board or Mayor, makes a community eligible to receive technical assistance from BRPC staff at no cost to the community for certain eligible projects. [Full solicitation](#) is here. A fillable application is here [DLTA 24 Fillable Application](#). Contact CJ Hoss, [choss@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:choss@berkshireplanning.org) for more information.

### B. 9C Cut

Unfortunately one of the state legislative earmarks BRPC received was subject to a so-called 9C cut by the Governor. Section 9C of Chapter 29 of the Massachusetts General Laws requires that when projected revenue is less than projected spending, the Governor must act to ensure that the budget is brought into balance. The earmark was to support the [Berkshire Funding Focus](#), whose aim is to help communities, non-profits and businesses get grants, especially federal grants. It is more surprising that a program that seeks to bring in additional revenue would be cut when revenue is needed.

### C. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The Transportation staff are beginning the process of developing the next TIP for Berkshire County. The TIP is a prioritized list of transportation projects expected to be built over the next several years. This document is a prerequisite to receiving federal funding for eligible highway, bridge, and transit projects. Contact Anuja Koirala, [akoirala@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:akoirala@berkshireplanning.org) for more information.