



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, March 7, 2024

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 John Duval called the meeting to order at 4:00 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 – unavailable

John Duval, Vice-Chair, Adams Alternate

Sheila Irvin, Clerk, Pittsfield Delegate – unavailable

Doug McNally, Commission Development Committee, Chair, Windsor Delegate

Roger Bolton, Environmental Review Committee Chair, Williamstown Alternate

Christine Rasmussen, Regional Issues Committee Chair, Stockbridge Alternate

Kyle Hanlon, At-large, North Adams Delegate

Sam Haupt, At-Large, Peru Delegate

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

Others: Lillian Zavatsky; Andrew Fitch; James, Great Barrington; Denny Alsop

III. Approval of February 1, 2024 Minutes

Doug McNally moved to approve the February 1, 2024 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Kyle Hanlon and approved by a roll call vote from John Duval, Doug McNally, Roger Bolton, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, and Sam Haupt. Buck Donovan abstained.

IV. Financial Reports

A. January 24 to February 29, 2024

Roger Bolton moved to accept the report, and Buck Donovan seconded the motion. It was approved by a roll call vote from John Duval, Buck Donovan, Doug McNally, Roger Bolton, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, and Sam Haupt.

B. Accounts Receivable Report February 2024

Tom reported that the Dalton CDGB funds were received and that the delay of \$45,000 from Mass CEC was expected as it takes a while to get those funds.

C. Line of Credit Report

It has not been used.

D. Increase in FY25 Health and Dental Insurance

MIIA health and dental insurance is increasing on July 1, 2024. BRPC's increases are below the maximum with other plans. Rates are based on usage.

- Network Blue NE (HMO) BRPC increase 6.88% Max. increase 9.95%
- Blue Care Elect Preferred (PPO) BRPC increase 6.88% Max. increase 9.95%
- Dental Blue Freedom BRPC increase 3.21% Max. increase 4.8%

V. Comments from Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Delegates and Alternates

John Duval reported and cautioned that the Adams Select Board has had open meeting complaints on general agenda topics like this one. Tom reported that he had consulted with BRPC's attorney, who said that as long as no action is taken, comments are fine. Anyone can request an agenda item for future meetings by contacting Tom or the Commission Chair, Malcolm Fick.

VI. Items Requiring Action

A. Vote to Approve the Submission of a Grant Application to the Health Resources in Action (HRiA) Massachusetts Community Health and Healthy Aging Funds (MACHHAF) Healthy Aging Program

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application to Health Resources in Action (HRiA) Massachusetts Community Health and Healthy Aging Funds, Healthy Aging Program, and to sign any resulting contracts and agreements. The funding would be utilized to plan and implement the development of adult exercise parks throughout Berkshire County. This project is part of revitalizing the Age Friendly Berkshires project. No match is required. \$100,000 annually over 3-5 years. Jaymie Zapata is the lead.

Doug McNally motioned to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application to Health Resources in Action (HRiA) Massachusetts Community Health and Healthy Aging Funds, Healthy Aging Program, and to sign any

resulting contracts and agreements. Roger Bolton seconded it. A roll vote approved it from John Duval, Buck Donovan, Doug McNally, Roger Bolton, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, and Sam Haupt.

B. Vote to Approve the Submission of a Grant Application to the Health Resources in Action (HRiA) Massachusetts Community Health and Healthy Aging Funds (MACHHAF) Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change (PSE) Program

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the Massachusetts Community Health and Healthy Aging Funds PSE Funding Stream and to sign any resulting contracts and agreements. The funding for this project will be used to continue the successful work of BRPC's Public Health program, "Gray to Green," and expand the model beyond Pittsfield and into North Adams. No match is required. \$200,000 annually over 3-5 years. Jaymie Zapata is the lead.

Roger Bolton motioned to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the Massachusetts Community Health and Healthy Aging Funds PSE Funding Stream and to sign any resulting contracts and agreements. Doug McNally seconded it. A roll vote approved it from John Duval, Buck Donovan, Doug McNally, Roger Bolton, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, and Sam Haupt.

C. Vote to Approve Submission of a Grant Application to the Health Resources in Action (HRiA) Massachusetts Community Health and Healthy Aging Funds (MACHHAF) Community Health Improvement Planning (CHIP) Program

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the Massachusetts Community Health and Healthy Aging Funds Community Health Improvement Planning Program and to sign any resulting contracts and agreements. A Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) is a long-term effort to improve the health of a community. A CHIP was previously developed for Berkshire County. This funding will be used to continue the CHIP process by implementing key items, assessing health trends, and establishing new priorities. This grant may be delivered over a 3 to 5-year period. The annual requested amount is \$75,000. There is no match required. The staff lead is Public Health Program Manager Laura Kittross, lkittross@berkshireplanning.org.

Doug McNally motioned to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the Massachusetts Community Health and Healthy Aging Funds Community Health Improvement Planning Program and to sign any resulting contracts and agreements. Buck Donovan seconded it. A roll call vote approved it from John Duval, Buck Donovan, Doug McNally, Roger Bolton, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, and Sam Haupt.

D. Vote to Approve Submission of Comments to the Commission on Energy Infrastructure Siting and Permitting on questions related to

the siting of clean energy infrastructure.

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the Executive Director to submit comments, prepared by the Regional Issues Committee, to the Commission on Energy Infrastructure Siting and Permitting on questions related to the siting of clean energy infrastructure. There is concern about maintaining local control over permitting.

Doub McNally motioned to authorize the Executive Director to submit the proposed comments to the Commission on Energy Infrastructure Siting and Permitting on questions related to the siting of clean energy infrastructure. A roll call vote approved it from John Duval, Buck Donovan, Doug McNally, Roger Bolton, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, and Sam Haupt.

VII. Committee Reports and Discussion

A. Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

The TAC met on February 20, 2024. The main topic was the development of the 2025 – 2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and project evaluation scores. Draft unapproved minutes were not available. The next meeting is scheduled for March 19, 2024.

B. Municipal Planning Organization (MPO)

The MPO met on February 27, 2024. Topics included Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) amendment related to transit, and a discussion of the development of the 2025 – 2029 Transportation Improvement Program and project evaluation scores. Draft unapproved minutes were in this meeting's materials. The next meeting is scheduled for March 26, 2024.

C. Regional Issues

The Regional Issues Committee met on February 28, 2024, and discussed responses to the Commission on Energy Infrastructure Siting and Permitting survey questions. Draft minutes were not yet available. The next meeting is March 27, 2024.

Public Comment:

Andrew Fitch, North Adams City Councilor and Chair of the Community Development Council, introduced himself and asked for ways to support and learn about interests such as green spaces, clean energy, Northern Tier Railway, health care access, and housing. Tom will follow up with him.

VIII. Executive Director's Report

A. Report on New Contracts/Agreements

New Grants and Contracts received/initiated from 01/24 – 02/29/2024

- Department of Public Health – Public Health Excellence for Shared Services - \$215,701.61
- Metropolitan Area Planning Council - Massachusetts Regional Trail Map - \$8,000
- Pittsfield - Francis Ave. Parklet and Routing Study - \$276,650
- Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities – Shared Services -

- \$90,000
- Public Health Institute of Western Mass - Support of 413 Cares Regional Partnership - \$10,000
- Berkshire Community College, BERK12 - Mohawk Trail - Hawlemont School District Sustainability Study Phase 2 - \$5,000
- Alford - Americans with Disabilities Act Improvement Plan - \$15,000
- Lee - Americans with Disabilities Act Improvement Plan - \$45,000
- Monterey - Americans with Disabilities Act Improvement Plan - \$30,000
- Lee - Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation - \$7,500

Grants and Contracts not received.

Staff reported not being aware of any grants that have not been received.

B. Berkshires Tomorrow Inc. (BTI) Update

No activity.

C. Staff Updates

- Recent Hires
 - Senior Planner – Housing– Brett Roberts starts March 20
 - Summer Intern – Peter LaRochelle starts late May
- Open Positions:
 - Internships - Arts & Culture Planning
 - Public Health Nurse Educator – filled by Sophie Carnes Jannen, NP
 - Public Health Community Social Worker

D. Rural Policy Advisory Commission (RPAC) Update

No activity.

E. Passenger Rail

- West-East Rail – The Healey Administration announced that Andy Kozoil had been appointed Director of West-East Rail. The press release is the meeting materials. Tom reached out and got a message that Andy is on extended leave.
- Berkshire Flyer - No known activity.
- Northern Tier Passenger Rail –No known activity.

F. DLTA Projects for 2024

For calendar year 2024, BRPC will assist with the following items through the District Local Technical Assistance Program.

- Clarksburg – Initiate the development of a Master Plan (potential match to grant application)
- Cheshire – Finalize Open Space and Recreation Plan
- Dalton – Assist with zoning to meet housing needs
- Egremont – Create a Housing Production Plan
- Great Barrington – Update Open Space and Recreation Plan (potential match to grant application)
- Lanesborough – Prepare Master Plan (match to town and grant funding)
- Lee – Completion of Hazard Mitigation planning

- Monterey – Analyze housing needs and provide options for increased housing development
- North Adams – Finalize Open Space and Recreation Plan
- North Adams – Prepare short-term rental database and application process
- New Marlborough – Provide guidance on policies and strategies to promote affordable housing
- Peru – Update Zoning Bylaw (match proposed to be provided by town)
- Pittsfield - Update Open Space and Recreation Plan (match with city funding for potential grant application)
- Pittsfield – Green Communities assistance
- Sheffield – Assist with housing related zoning bylaws (potential match to grant application)
- Washington – Update Zoning Bylaw (match to town and grant funding)
- West Stockbridge – Finalize Master Plan and Open Space and Recreation Plan
- Windsor – Prepare subdivision regulations and review of zoning related top housing
- Williamstown – Finalize Open Space and Recreation Plan
- Regional – Mobile Farmers Market (match to grant funding)
- Regional – Regional economic development (match to potential grant application)
- Regional – Shared services support (match to grant funding)
- Regional – Planning Board Training

G. CPTC Annual Conference 2024

The CPTC Annual Conference is on Saturday, March 16, 2024 at Holy Cross College in Worcester. It includes eighteen workshops on core and current topics in Massachusetts municipal planning and is a great opportunity to learn and network with municipal planners from around the state.

H. MassDOT Transportation Innovation Conference 2024

[The MassDOT Transportation Innovation Conference](#) will be held on April 30 & May 1, 2024 at the DCU Center, Worcester, MA. The conference provides a forum for transportation practitioners and researchers to share knowledge on innovative technologies, projects and processes to enhance efficiency and address important transportation issues. UMTC/Baystate Roads – UMTC (umasstransportationcenter.org)

I. MMA Western and Rural Mass Conference

The MMA Western and Rural Mass Conference will be held at the Hotel Northampton, Northampton on April 27, 2024 (not April 6). This has become an annual event for local officials to network and learn current information about important matters impacting their communities. Select Board Association Western and Rural Massachusetts [Conference - Massachusetts Municipal Association \(MMA\)](#).

IX. Old Business

A. Officer Terms

At the January meeting, the Commission voted to change the BRPC Bylaws to allow Officers and Committee members to serve for two year terms instead of one year. It was clarified that those terms applied to the Officer and Committee members currently in those positions.

X. New Business

B. March 21 Commission Meeting

The next Full Commission meeting is March 21, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. Tom will reach out to Eversource determine if they would be available to present their plans regarding increasing demands on the electrical grid system as the state tries to achieve clean energy goals.

Other potential items previously mentioned include:

- Micro-transit, especially the on-demand South County effort Housing success stories
- Presentation on the meaning of environmental justice communities
- Regionalization
- Ideas to attract new residents to Berkshire County
- Brownfields report with a list of projects and payment schedules; sample of projects with photos

XI. Adjournment

Doug McNally motioned to adjourn the meeting at 4:58 p.m., seconded by Kyle Hanlon, and unanimously approved by a roll call vote: John Duval, Buck Donovan, Doug McNally, Roger Bolton, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, and Sam Haupt.

Attachments:

- Unapproved Minutes of the February 2, 2024, BRPC Executive Committee Meeting
- January 24, 2024 to February 29, 2024 Expenditures Report
- Accounts Receivable Report – February 2024
- Line of Credit Report
- Executive Director's Memorandum
- Unapproved Minutes of the February 27, 2024 Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting
- Resume – Brett Roberts
- Resume – Peter LaRochelle
- Press Release – West – East Rail Director
- January 2024 Technical Assistance Memo