



FULL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES March 21, 2024

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:

Diana Mott – Becket Alternate (difficulty connecting)
Peter Traub – Cheshire Delegate
Mary McGurn – Egremont, Delegate (part of the meeting)
Pedro Pachano – Great Barrington Delegate
Malcolm Fick – Great Barrington Alternate
Keith Harrison – Hinsdale Delegate
Leanne Yinger – Lanesborough Delegate
Buck Donovan – Lee Delegate
Sari Hoy – Sheffield, Delegate
Christine Rasmussen – Stockbridge Alternate
Don Gagnon – Washington, Delegate
Roger Bolton – Williamstown Alternate
Doug McNally – Windsor Delegate

Towns with no Delegate or Alternate present:

Adams, Alford, Clarksburg, Dalton, Florida, Hancock, Lenox, Monterey, Mount Washington, New Ashford, New Marlborough, North Adams, Otis, Peru, Pittsfield, Richmond, Sandisfield, Savoy, West Stockbridge

Staff Present:

Thomas Matuszko, Marianne Sniezek, Kate Hill Tapia, Laura Brennan, Clete Kus, Melissa Provencher

Others Present:

PCTV; Eversource employees: Mike Vedovelli, Juan Martinez, Jacob Lucas, Erin Engstrom, Aimee Henderson, Christopher Comack; Rory O’Hanlon MA Executive Office of Economic Development; David

Wasielewski, Dalton

C. Approval of January 18, 2024 Minutes

Roger Bolton moved to approve the January 18, 2024, draft meeting minutes; Doug McNally seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The minutes were approved with a roll call vote with Peter Traub, Pedro Pachano, Keith Harrison, Leanne Yinger, Buck Donovan, Christine Rasmussen, Roger Bolton, and Doug McNally voting to approve.

Abstained: Don Gagnon

II. Suggestions from Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Delegates and Alternates about Items or Topics for Future Meetings

None

III. Comments from the Public

None

IV. Presentation of Executive Committee Actions

There were no questions or discussions about the Executive Committee actions taken on the Commission's behalf at its February 1 and March 7, 2024, meetings.

V. Vote to Appoint Two Members to the Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority (BCRHA) Board of Commissioners

The Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority (BCRHA) has requested that BRPC re-appoint two members, Jay Sacchetti and Lisa Sloane, to three year terms to the BCRHA Board of Commissioners.

Doug McNally moved to appoint Jay Sachetti and Lisa Sloane to three year terms to the BCRHA Board of Commissioners. Roger Bolton seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a roll call vote from Peter Traub, Pedro Pachano, Keith Harrison, Leanne Yinger, Buck Donovan, Sari Hoy, Christine Rasmussen, Don Gagnon, Roger Bolton, and Doug McNally voting to approve.

VI. Presentation on and Discussion of "Mass Leads: An Act Relative to Strengthening Massachusetts' Economic Leadership" also Referred to as the Economic Development Bond Bill

We learned about the state's economic development plan "Team Massachusetts: Leading Future Generations" at the January meeting. Rory O'Hanlon, from the Executive Office of Economic Development, explained H. 4459, the proposed legislation to implement the plan. The bill can be accessed at Economic Development Bill | Mass.gov.

Equity, affordability, and competitiveness are guiding principles for three focuses:

- Fundamentals (infrastructure such as housing & transportation)
- Talent (boosting workforce, keeping students, welcoming immigrants)
- Sectors (supporting businesses such as life sciences, healthcare, climatetech, tourism and culture)

Tools to achieve implementation include capital, tax incentives, operating money (in regular budget, not from the bill), and policies. Equity is a priority to ensure benefits for all residents.

The bill is with a joint House and Senate committee that will schedule hearings before the bill continues the path to become law. Then the bill goes back to the House, then Senate, then a conference committee, then the Governor's desk, which usually happens at the end of the legislative session in late July.

VII. Presentation of Eversource's Electric Sector Modernization Plan, "A Comprehensive Roadmap to Achieve Massachusetts' Clean Energy Goals."

Massachusetts' Clean Energy Climate Plan goal is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2050. Representatives from Eversource presented their Electric Sector Modernization Plan to enable Massachusetts to achieve that goal. The plan can be accessed at Electric Sector Modernization Plan (eversource.com).

The plan includes new substations and upgrades to existing ones. A combination of generating more electricity and finding efficiencies is needed to reach the goals. Offshore wind projects were discussed and the importance of expanding interregional transfer capacity. Creative solutions are especially needed in the last ten years of the plan to get to zero emissions. Stakeholder engagement is a key component of the plan. Recommendations for an advisory group are welcome.

Doug McNally suggested that the 10KW recommended for residences is inadequate for a home with an electric car and stove, splits, and on-demand hot water; the need is closer to 20KW.

VIII. Executive Director's Report

A. Agricultural Preservation Restrictions, Sheffield Properties

Tom reported he waived the standard notice requirements for the purchase of agricultural restrictions on two large properties in Sheffield.

B. Housing Plan Hearing

The Healy Administration will host a hearing on a housing plan. It might be at the Berkshire Innovation Center as other hearings were. Stay tuned.

IX. Adjournment

Doug McNally motioned to adjourn, seconded by Pedro Pachano, and approved by roll call vote:

Diana Mott, Peter Traub, Pedro Pachano, Keith Harrison, Leanne Yinger, Buck Donovan, Sari Hoy, Christine Rasmussen, Don Gagnon, Roger Bolton, and Doug McNally

The meeting adjourned at 8:49 p.m.