



**APPROVED Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Executive Committee Minutes
Tuesday, July 1, 2025**

This was a virtual meeting as allowed by An Act relative to extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the state of emergency extending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c.30A sec.20 until June 30, 2027.

I. Call to Order & Open Meeting Law Statement

Chair Malcolm Fick called the meeting to order at 4:00. He stated that BRPC was recording the meeting and said if anyone else wanted to record it, they needed to inform him. iBerkshires stated they were recording the meeting.

II. Roll Call:

Office Manager Marianne Sniezek read the roll call:

Members Present:

Malcolm Fick, Chair, Great Barrington Alternate

John Duval, Vice Chair, Adams Alternate

Sheila Irvin, Clerk, Pittsfield Delegate

Buck Donovan, Treasurer, Finance Committee Chair, Lee Delegate

Douglas McNally, Commission Development Committee Chair, Windsor Delegate

Mark Smith, Environmental Review Committee Chair, Lenox Delegate

Christine Rasmussen, Regional Issues Committee Chair, Stockbridge Alternate

Kyle Hanlon, CEDS Committee Chair, North Adams Delegate - late

Sam Haupt, Peru Delegate

Members not Present:

None

Others Present:

Mary McGurn, Delegate Egremont, James Gt. Barrington Citizen

Staff Present:

Tom Matuszko, Executive Director; Laura Brennan, Assistant Director;

Marianne Sniezek, Office Manager

III. Vote to Approve June 5, 2025 Minutes

Doug McNally motioned to approve the June 5, 2025 meeting minutes. Sheila Irvin seconded the motion. Christine Rasmussen asked to amend the minutes to add before the adjournment the Executive Committee thanked Roger Bolton for his long-standing service and insightful comments, Doug McNally seconded the amendment. The motion passed with affirmative votes from Malcolm Fick,

John Duval, Sheila Irvin, Doug McNally, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon and Sam Haupt. Buck Donovan and Mark Smith abstained.

IV. Financial Reports

A. Vote to Approve the May 30 – June 20, 2025 Expenditures Report

Sam Haupt motioned to approve the May 30 – June 20, 2025 expenditures report. Kyle Hanlon seconded the motion. The motion passed with affirmative votes from Malcolm Fick, John Duval, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, Doug McNally, Mark Smith, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, and Sam Haupt.

B. Report on the Accounts Receivable – June 2025

Tom reported we are in good shape with the aged receivables.

C. Report on the Line of Credit – June 2025

The Line of Credit has not been used.

D. Report on Federally Funded Contracts

Tom reported there was no new news. BRPC will monitor the court actions related to ICE.

V. Open Comments from Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Delegates and Alternate Delegates not to be further discussed at this meeting by the Executive Committee.

None

VI. Items Requiring Action

A. Vote to Approve the Submission of a Grant Application (after the fact) to the RIZE Mosaic Family Resilience Grant to establish a scalable low-threshold housing and service delivery model to address the growing crises of Opioid Use Disorder (OUD), social isolation and homelessness*

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the Executive Director, after the fact, to submit a grant application to the RIZE Mosaic Family Resilience Grant and sign any resulting contracts and agreements. This grant would establish a scalable low-threshold housing and service delivery model to address the growing crises of Opioid Use Disorder (OUD), social isolation and homelessness. The partners would pilot a cluster-site of 25 “tiny-house” units to empower family and social structures, integrating harm reduction, peer support and navigation that meet familial/social units where they are at. This three-year grant allows for funding of \$500,000 per year (\$1.5M total). Expected key partners include Berkshire Health Systems/ Berkshire Harm Reduction, Hearthway, Inc and the City of Pittsfield. There is no match required. There would be subcontractors/subrecipients. BRPC contacts are Andy Ottoson, aottoson@berkshireplanning.org and CJ Hoss,

CHoss@berkshireplanning.org. Tom reported this grant application is an example of BRPC looking to diversify sources of funding.

Doug McNally moved to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application, after the fact, to the RIZE Mosaic Family Resilience Grant and sign any resulting contracts and agreements. Buck Donovan seconded the motion. The motion passed with affirmative votes from Malcolm Fick, John Duval, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, Doug McNally, Mark Smith, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, and Sam Haupt.

B. Vote to Approve the Submission of a Grant Application (after the fact) to the Massachusetts Environmental Trust (MET) for the development of a watershed-based plan for the upper Hoosic River watershed *

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application (after the fact) to the Massachusetts Environmental Trust (MET) for Environmental Advocacy, Educational and Conservation Activities Focused on Improving Aquatic Habitats and to sign any resulting contracts and agreements.

BRPC's Environmental and Energy team are applying for a \$50,000 grant in partnership with Hoosic River Watershed Association (HooRWA), Taconic Chapter of Trout Unlimited, and MCLA to support the development of a watershed-based plan for the upper Hoosic River watershed. This project will include grassroot level environmental initiatives, public education, and citizen involvement activities that are fully inclusive and address the needs and interests of citizens in low-income or "environmental justice" communities.

The partners would work together to support the mapping of a portion of North Adams stormwater infrastructure, begin to identify sources of pollution and the most appropriate sites for green infrastructure and engage the community through outreach events such as River Fest, river cleanups and water quality monitoring. MCLA's GIS class will use this as a project-based learning opportunity and the students will work with BRPC and their Professor to map outfalls and catch basins. This application has no BRPC match requirement. Primary staff contact is Alison Dixon adixon@berkshireplanning.org.

Doug McNally moved to authorize the Executive Director, after the fact, to submit a grant application to the Massachusetts Environmental Trust (MET) for Environmental Advocacy, Educational and Conservation Activities Focused on Improving Aquatic Habitats and to sign any resulting contracts and agreements. Christine Rasmussen seconded the motion. The motion passed with affirmative votes Malcolm Fick, John Duval, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, Doug McNally, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, and Sam Haupt.

C. Vote to Approve the Submission of a Grant Application (after the fact) to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Long Island Sound Futures Fund to support the installation of a stormwater management system at Francis Avenue in Pittsfield

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the Executive Director (after the fact) to submit a grant application to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Long Island Sound Future Fund grant and to sign any resulting contracts and agreements.

BRPC's Environmental and Energy team are applying for a \$266,730.06 grant in partnership with the City of Pittsfield to support the installation of a stormwater management system at Francis Avenue. This project will remediate stormwater, control flooding, and support the larger improvement of connections to downtown resources through the Francis Ave. Parklet and Routing Project.

This project has secured partial funding through the Mass DEP Section 319 Program and has applied for additional funding through EEA Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program. This application has a 50% match that is expected to be covered by overlapping EEA MVP Grant funds. Primary staff contact is Courteny Morehouse, cmorehouse@berkshireplanning.org .

Doug McNally moved to authorize the Executive Director (after the fact) to submit a grant application to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Long Island Sound Future Fund grant and to sign any resulting contracts and agreements. Mark Smith seconded the motion. The motion passed with affirmative votes from Malcolm Fick, John Duval, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, Doug McNally, Mark Smith, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, and Sam Haupt.

D. Vote to Approve the Submission of a Grant Application (after the fact) to the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant program with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to develop and implement a safety countermeasure toolbox informed by the Berkshires' existing Safety Action Plan

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the Executive Director (after the fact) to submit a grant application to the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant program with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to develop and implement a safety countermeasure toolbox informed by the Berkshires' existing Safety Action Plan and to sign any resulting contracts and agreements.

BPRC seeks SS4A Supplemental Planning and Demonstration grant funding to develop a safety countermeasure toolbox informed by the Berkshires' existing Safety Action Plan. This toolbox will then be applied to 12 demonstration sites across the County to show its versatility and ability to bring systemic safety to the region. BRPC segments the County into six

subregions: North, North-Central, Southeast, Southwest, the City of North Adams, and the City of Pittsfield. Each subregion will host two demonstration projects, while all subregions will benefit from supplemental educational and outreach activities that promote data transparency.

BPRC will obtain support from Citian CRASH, a cloud-based software-as-a-service platform, which will use real-time traffic safety data to understand the impacts of the supplemental planning and demonstration activities and facilitate long-term reporting. BPRC will also conduct a comprehensive outreach and education campaign in conjunction with the demonstration activities.

Proposed treatment solutions address these safety concerns, in addition to pedestrian and bicycle safety. Chicanes, speed feedback signs, and speed humps will mitigate single-vehicle and rear-end crashes. Medians and roundabouts will reduce instances of angle crashes. Finally, curb extensions, high-visibility crosswalks, and rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs) will enhance safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

The total grant budget is \$2,487,100. The Federal share requested is \$1,989,680 with Non-federal match of \$497,420 provided by the Massachusetts Federal Funds Infrastructure Funds Office. Primary staff contact is Nick Russo, nrusso@berkshireplanning.org.

Doug McNally moved to authorize the Executive Director (after the fact) to submit a grant application to the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant program with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to develop and implement a safety countermeasure toolbox informed by the Berkshires' existing Safety Action Plan and to sign any resulting contracts and agreements. Buck Donovan seconded the motion. The motion passed with affirmative votes from Malcolm Fick, John Duval, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, Doug McNally, Mark Smith, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, and Sam Haupt.

E. Vote to Authorize the Executive Director to Enter into Intergovernmental Agreements and Contracts with Municipalities for FY 26

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the Executive Director to enter into intergovernmental agreements and contracts for services with municipalities in FY 26.

Doug McNally moved to authorize the Executive Director to Enter into Intergovernmental Agreements and Contracts with Municipalities for FY 26. Sam Haupt seconded the motion. The motion passed with affirmative votes from Malcolm Fick, John Duval, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, Doug McNally, Mark Smith, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, and Sam Haupt.

VII. Committee Report and Discussion

A. Comprehensive Development Committee

The Commission Development Committee did not meet in June 2025.

B. Environmental Review Committee

Mark Smith will be the new chair for FY 26. The Environmental Review Committee did not meet in June 2025. BRPC received notice of an Environmental Notification Form for the Parker Pond Dredging Project in Pittsfield. This is expected to be noticed in the Environmental Monitor on June 25, 2025. Parker Pond is approximately 1 acre on a residential property. The primary reason for the ENF is proximity to Environmental Justice neighborhoods. We are following the Environmental Review Committee process, but there does not appear to be any regional impacts and most likely we will not submit comments. The previous Environmental Review Committee Chair, Roger Bolton, assisted with the Parker Pond notice.

C. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee did not meet in June 2025.

D. Regional Issues Committee

The Regional Issues Committee did not meet in June 2025. All thanked Christine for writing a document on pieces of legislation that may be of interest for priorities for the Regional Issues Committee. The email was sent to all members by Tom. If anyone has any questions, they can contact Christine directly or contact Tom.

E. Berkshire Brownfield Committee

The Berkshire Brownfield Committee did not meet in June 2025.

F. Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Committee

The MPO met on June 24, 2025. The main agenda items were the approval of the 2026 Unified Planning Work Program, an adjustment to the 2025 UPWP to transfer \$10,000 from Task 1.1 Management of the 3C Process to Task 3.5 Climate Change and Sustainability, an amendment to the 2025 – 2029 TIP to move N. Adams, Ashland Street from FFY 25 to FFY 2026 and move Egremont, Mt. Washington Road from FFY 26 to FFY 25, and a presentation on the micro-transit feasibility study. Draft unapproved minutes were not yet available.

G. Comprehensive Economic Development (CEDS) Committee

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee did not meet in June 2025.

H. Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

The Transportation Advisory Committee did not meet in June 2025.

VIII. Executive Director's Report

A. Report on New Contracts/Agreements

New Grants and Contracts received/initiated from 5/30/25 – 6/23/25

- Great Barrington – Economic Development Planning - \$17,500
- Lanesborough – Economic Development Planning - \$10,000
- Milltown – Berkshire Benchmarks – \$14,700
- MA Department of Environmental Protection - Berkshire NPS Coordinator Program - \$100,000
- Berkshire Public Health Alliance – Inspection Services FY26:
 - o Richmond - \$23,133

Grants and Contracts not received.

- Community First Partnership- Adams, North Adams, Lanesborough, Lee, and Great Barrington - \$75,000 per year for three years for a total of \$225,000. The Mass Save program instead awarded a larger award to focus on the city of Pittsfield. BRPC was awarded \$85,500 a year for three years to serve the Community First Partnership Program in Pittsfield. BRPC is awaiting the agreement for Pittsfield.

B. Berkshires Tomorrow Inc. (BTI) Update

There was no activity in June.

C. Staff Updates

15-year Anniversary

- Marianne Sniezek – Office Manager

Resignation

- Kate Hill Tapia – Office Administrator. Committee members expressed appreciation for Kate's work.

D. Rural Policy Advisory Committee (RPAC) Update

The Rural Policy Advisory Commission did not meet in June 2025.

E. Seasonal Communities Advisory Council Update

The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) is holding three virtual listening sessions in June and July. Established by the Affordable Homes Act in August 2024, the Seasonal Communities Designation is designed to provide a unique set of housing tools to communities with significant seasonal variation in housing and employment. You can read more about the designation by clicking [here](#).

In each session, EOHLC will provide a brief overview of the designation and the work EOHLC is doing to develop regulations structuring the tools it makes available to communities before opening for public feedback. Regulations are still in development, and as a result, these sessions will not provide definitive answers on questions about final regulations, but rather, will give residents the chance to shape how regulations answer these questions. Participants need to Register in advance using session-specific links below:

- June 26, 2025 @ 6PM – [Register Here](#)

- July 9, 2025 @ 6PM – [Register Here](#)
- July 17 @ 11AM – [Register Here](#)

Questions? Contact: eohtcseasonalcommunities@mass.gov

Tom encouraged the Committee members to attend.

F. Passenger Rail

- West-East Rail – The Pittsfield double tracking project will start design soon. A planning exercise will be initiated soon to determine the best way to get a second platform at the Pittsfield station.
- Berkshire Flyer – The Berkshire Flyer train will not run for several weeks due to track repairs. Bus service will be provided east of Albany.
- Northern Tier Passenger Rail – A proposal to submit this service to the Federal Rail Administration Corridor ID program is being held up due to uncertainty with the announcement of that grant program.

G. Berkshire Microtransit Study: Upcoming Community Open Houses

Previous Studies have identified limited access to public transportation and first/last-mile connections as major transportation barriers in the Berkshires. Microtransit, an app-based, on-demand shared-ride public transit service, has been explored to overcome these barriers and enhance mobility. BRPC has sponsored a feasibility study to evaluate the potential of a Microtransit program in Berkshire County. There will be community open houses on July 18th and 19th in North Adams, Pittsfield, and Lenox, to enable the public to learn more, ask questions, and share ideas. (Flyer was attached.) For more details, visit: BRPC [BRPC Microtransit](#)

H. EOHL Office Hours on Accessory Dwelling Units

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities is holding ADU office hours, beginning this June, to support municipal planners in understanding Massachusetts' new Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) law and regulations, which became fully effective as of February 2nd, 2025. These office hours began June 11th (3:00pm to 4:30pm) and will continue every second Wednesday through November. These sessions will provide an opportunity for planners to engage with EOHL and ask questions about the new law and regulations. Registration is REQUIRED for the following dates, 6/11, 6/25, 7/9, 8/13, 9/10, 10/8, 11/12. The time is from 3:00 to 4:30pm. Registration is at <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/OSa63wKfR4GKJnIMaDfdig>

Tom reported that CJ Hoss is looking at this as a topic for the Regional Issues Committee.

I. Public Comment Period for the Starter Home/Chapter 40Y Draft Regulations

A “starter home” is a smaller single-family home suitable for first-time home buyers, downsizing, smaller households, and people needing a more affordable single-family housing option. Chapter 40Y sets up a process for communities to create Starter Home Zoning Districts, where starter homes can be built. The Starter Homes Draft Regulations, 760 CMR 69.00: Starter Home Zoning Districts ([download](#)), are intended to provide clarity on the administration of M.G.L. c40Y, the Starter Home law. The public comment period on the draft regulations starts on June 20, 2025, and closes on July 25, 2025. Comments can be submitted at www.mass.gov/starterhomes. EOHLC intends to issue final regulations in early fall 2025.

J. 2025 State of the County Update

Since the development of the State of the County Report in 2022, Berkshire Benchmarks, an initiative of BRPC, has published an annual update, tracking specified socio and economic indicators, numeric tools that track the health and vitality of a region over time. The 2025 State of the County Report is available [at State-of-the-County-Report-2025.pdf](#)

Tom reported that there have not been many changes to this data.

K. Massachusetts Integrated Land Use Strategy

On Behalf of MARPA, the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies, the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) submitted a joint application in response to an RFQ from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs regarding consulting services to develop the Massachusetts Integrated Land Use Strategy (MILUS). This proposal involves all RPAs in the Commonwealth, to varying degrees. NMCOG and Merrimac Valley Planning Commission (MVPC) have led a working group involving BRPC and a small group of RPAs to develop a collaborative approach to address the state’s needs. If the MARPA partnership is selected, BRPC will co-lead an economic development working group with the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission and will also be involved in several project tasks that call for all RPAs to participate, including the development of an interactive GIS-based planning tool to visually explore the intersection of state and local plans, policies, and regulations.

IX. Old Business and Discussion

A. Discussion about the BRPC Annual Meeting

We continue to work towards securing a speaker for the Annual Meeting. As a reminder, we have reserved the Proprietors Lodge in Pittsfield for Thursday evening October 16, 2025 as the date for our annual meeting. Please save that date.

X. New Business

A. Discussion about Topics for the July 17, 2025 Commission Meeting

Potential topics for the July 17, 2025 Commission Meeting include:

- Election of Officers
- Vote to Ratify Appointment of Representatives to Related Groups Not Under the Jurisdiction of the Commission
- Presentation on Renewable Energy Siting Regulations
- Roundtable Discussion of Municipal Items
- Presentation on the Starter Homes draft Regulations
- Presentation on the State's Housing Plan
- Other ideas

After a discussion, it we decided to pursue a presentation on the Microtransit Study or on Renewable Energy Siting Regulations

B. Discussion about the Kusik Award

The Kusik Award was instituted to recognize projects, groups, or individuals who have made outstanding contributions to planning in Berkshire County. The Committee agreed pursuing an award this year was a good idea and would seek nominations. Those nominations will be due by August 25th with the Executive Committee making its decision at the September 4th meeting. The award would be presented at the annual meeting on October 16th. A nomination form is included in the meeting material.

Tom requested members to send him their nominations.

XI. Adjournment

Doug McNally made a motion to adjourn. Kyle Hanlon seconded the motion. The motion passed with affirmative votes from Malcolm Fick, John Duval, Sheila Irvin, Buck Donovan, Doug McNally, Mark Smith, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, and Sam Haupt. The meeting adjourned at 4:39 pm.

Documents and Exhibits Used:

- 2025.06.05 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes – Unapproved DRAFT
- 2025.05.30 – 2025.06.20 Expenditures Report
- 2025.06 Accounts Receivables Report
- 2025.06 Line of Credit Report
- 2025.06.24 Executive Director Memorandum
- Microtransit Study Open House Flyer
- Kusik Award Nomination Form 2025
- May 2025 – Technical Assistance Memorandum