



**APPROVED Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Executive Committee Minutes
Thursday, October 2, 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 4:02PM. He stated that BRPC was recording the meeting and said that if anyone else wanted to record it, they needed to inform him.

Welcome was made to Caitlin Davis, new office administrator for BRPC.

II. Roll Call: Marianne Sniezek, Office Manager, read the roll call:

Members Present:

Malcolm Fick, Chair, Great Barrington Alternate
Buck Donovan, Vice Chair, Lee Delegate
Sheila Irvin, Berkshire Brownfields Committee Chair, Pittsfield Delegate
Kyle Hanlon, At-Large, North Adams Delegate
Christine Rasmussen, Regional Issues Committee Chair, Stockbridge Alternate
Sam Haupt, At-Large, Peru Delegate
Douglas McNally, Commission Development Chair, Windsor Delegate

Members not Present:

Mark Smith, Environmental Review Committee Chair, Lenox Delegate

Others Present:

Christian Rowe, Adams, D
Mary McGurn, Egremont, D
Kate Fletcher, Stockbridge, D
James, Great Barrington, Citizen

Staff Present:

Tom Matuszko, Executive Director
Laura Brennan, Assistant Director
Marianne Sniezek, Office Manager
Caitlin Davis, Office Administrator

III. Vote to Approve the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of September 4, 2025, Minutes

Doug McNally motioned to approve the September 4, 2025, meeting minutes with the changes to reflect the correct date of the meeting. Buck Donovan seconded the motion. Malcolm Fick, Buck Donovan, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, Sam Haupt and Doug McNally all voted affirmatively. Sheila Irvin abstained.

IV. Financial Reports

A. Vote to Approve the August 27, 2025 – September 18, 2025, Expenditures Report

Kyle Hanlon motioned to approve the August 27, 2025 – September 18, 2025, expenditures report. Doug McNally seconded the motion. The motion passed with affirmative votes from Malcolm Fick, Buck Donovan, Sheila Irvin, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, Sam Haupt and Doug McNally.

B. Report on the Accounts Receivable September 2025

BRPC received payment on several over 90-day invoices. One group purchasing vendor, Sonoco, still needs to pay BRPC from the previous Fiscal Year. They are no longer a vendor with BRPC this Fiscal Year.

C. Report on the Line of Credit – September 2025

The Line of Credit has not been used. BRPC is monitoring the federal government shutdown and how it could affect us.

D. Report on Federally Funded Contracts

Tom reported the \$17 million Build Grant for the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail for design is still moving forward. BRPC is continuing to apply for federal applications. The concern is what is going to happen with the federal budget. Some agencies have provided BRPC with guidance on processing payments if the government shutdown could last long term.

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

Sam Haupt mentioned the upcoming hybrid public hearing the joint committee on revenue is hosting on October 7th, on pilot reform, from 1-5pm. The public is invited and there are two competing bills, both offered in the House and Senate. There are 53 days from the date of the hearing to submit written testimony, which he would like the committee to consider doing so.

VI. Items Requiring Action

A. Vote to Approve the Submission of a Grant Application to the Williamstown Community Chest for a Fund for Williamstown Grant*

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the Williamstown Community Chest for the

Fund for Williamstown grant and sign any resulting contracts and agreements. The grant would provide funding for an innovative 6-week fall prevention program in which a trained MMA instructor would teach older adults (55+) at The Williamstown Council on Aging to fall safely through exposure to mixed martial arts (MMA) techniques that are often taught in "hard" martial arts classes like jujitsu and judo. Expected partners include the Williamstown Council on Aging and local MMA instructors. The amount requested is \$2,500. There is no match required. The BRPC contact is Sophie Carnes Jannen, scarnesjannen@berkshireplanning.org x63.

Doug McNally moved to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the Williamstown Community Chest for the Fund for Williamstown and sign any resulting contracts and agreements. Buck Donovan seconded the motion. The motion passed with affirmative votes from Malcolm Fick, Buck Donovan, Sheila Irvin, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, Sam Haupt and Doug McNally.

B. Vote to Approve the Submission of a Grant Application to the MOSAIC RIZE Municipal Matching Grant Program*

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the MOSAIC RIZE Municipal Matching Grant Program and sign any resulting contracts and agreements. This grant would allow for work to abate the impact of opioids in North Berkshire County. This one-year grant allows for funding of up to \$300,000. Expected partners and project specifics will be determined by community partners in the North Berkshire HEAL Coalition. There is a match required which is being provided through existing municipal opioid abatement funds from the eight municipalities who have signed on to the related Intermunicipal Agreement (IMA), pending approval by the IMA's designated North Berkshire Opioid Abatement Collaborative (OAC) Advisory Board. There would likely be subcontractors/subrecipients. BRPC contact is Andy Ottoson, aottoson@berkshireplanning.org

Kyle Hanlon moved to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the MOSAIC RIZE Municipal Matching Grant program and sign any resulting contracts and agreements. Buck Donovan seconded the motion.

The motion passed with affirmative votes from Malcolm Fick, Buck Donovan, Sheila Irvin, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, Sam Haupt and Doug McNally.

C. Vote to Approve BRPC's Updated Continuation of Medical Benefits After Retirement Policy*

This item was passed over as Tom reported there was a typo and another item that needed to be clarified. No action on this item.

VII. Committee Report and Discussion

A. Commission Development Committee

The Commission Development Committee did not meet in September 2025.

B. Environmental Review Committee

The Environmental Review Committee did not meet in September 2025.

C. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee did not meet in September 2025.

D. Regional Issues Committee

The Regional Issues Committee did not meet in September 2025. Malcolm thanked Christine for her summary of the legislation.

E. Berkshire Brownfield Committee

The Berkshire Brownfield Committee did not meet in September 2025.

F. Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Committee (MPO)

The MPO met on September 23rd. The main agenda item was a report on the recommendations for the micro-transit study.

G. Comprehensive Economic Development (CEDS) Committee

The CEDS Committee met on September 17, 2025. Proponents of two CEDS Priority Projects offered updates to the group, and the committee reviewed the timeline for the Year 3 Performance Progress Report to EDA. The group also reviewed a request from the BRPC Transportation Program requesting input regarding Critical Rural Freight Corridor (CRFC) designations.

H. Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

The Transportation Advisory Committee did not meet in September 2025.

VIII. Executive Director's Report

A. Report on New Contracts/Agreements

New Grants and Contracts received/initiated from 8/27/25 – 9/23/25

- Berkshire Public Health Alliance - Regional Public Health Inspection Program:
 - Becket - \$35,582
 - Cheshire - 24,000
 - Dalton - 61,050
 - Egremont - 13,000
 - Peru - 12,862
 - Savoy - 7,875
 - Washington - \$5,000
- Berkshire Public Health Alliance - Regional Public Health Nursing Program – Windsor - \$2,310
- Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs - Sheffield - Housing Planning Implementation - \$32,900

- Berkshire Gas/Mass Save - Energy - Pittsfield Community First Partnership - \$102,600
- Eversource/Mass Save - Energy - Pittsfield Community First Partnership - \$153,900
- The Nature Conservancy - Berkshire Wildlife Linkage - \$10,000
- Savoy - Culvert Replacement Project on Old Main Road 4 - \$10,000
- Sandisfield - Hazard Mitigation Plan Update - \$22,500

Grants and Contracts not received.

We are not aware of any grants not received.

B. Berkshires Tomorrow Inc. (BTI) Update

The BTI Board approved the following:

- Approved the President to sign an agreement with Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and any other contracts to support the FY2026 Vaccination Clinics, not to exceed \$10,000, including a 2% administrative fee.
- Approved the President to sign an FY2026 agreement between Berkshires Tomorrow and BRPC for a Software Lease for the following Subscriptions: Qty 56 - Microsoft Office 365, 58 Qty - Microsoft Defender, 2 Qty - Office 365, 2 Qty -Microsoft Visio Plan 1, 1 Qty- Microsoft Azure (used for GIS). Total \$36,620.00.
- Approved BTI to submit a grant application to the Health New England Where Health Matters Grant and sign any resulting contracts and agreements. This grant would develop and prepare for implementation of a Community EMS (CEMS) model to deliver preventive, high-value/low-risk field services for older adults in southern Berkshire County. This one-year grant allows for funding of up to \$50,000 with a 2% BTI administration fee. Expected partners include Southern Berkshire Ambulance (SBA) and others. There is no match required. There would be subcontractors. BRPC contact is Andy Ottoson, aottoson@berkshireplanning.org

C. Staff Updates

- Open Position: Public Health Trainer
- New Hires:
 - Caitlin Davis – Office Administrator
 - James Massey – Public Health Inspector
 - Jennifer Sweet – PT Title 5 Specialist

D. Seasonal Communities Advisory Council Update

As reported during the September 18th Commission Meeting, the Seasonal Communities Advisory Council met on September 11th to receive a Draft Regulation Update from EOHLC. The presentation included an overview of key definitions and the potential conditions related to designation or revocation of Seasonal Communities status, and proposed zoning requirements or waivers thereof. The meeting also discussed Year-Round Housing and Employment-Specific (essential public employee preference) or Vocation-Specific (artist) Housing and explored some possible uses of the \$2M included in Governor Healey's CIP for Seasonal Communities. Draft regulations will be made available for public comment for one month, as

the next step.

E. Passenger Rail

- West-East Rail – No update this month.
- Berkshire Flyer – The Berkshire Flyer train service had been served by buses between Albany and Pittsfield due to track failure this summer. That service ended on September 7, 2025.
- Northern Tier Passenger Rail – No update this month.

More information on these items can be found at [Compass Rail | Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/compass-rail).

F. MARPA & DLS Conference

Registration is open for the 2025 MARPA and DLS Conference on Tuesday, October 7th. The event will be held in Worcester at the College of the Holy Cross from 9 am to 12:30 pm. Registration at: www.mapc.org/event/2025-marpa-and-dls-conference/.

G. Berkshire County Municipal Officials Networking

The Berkshire Municipal Managers Association, Berkshire Selectmen's Association, and BRPC continue to collaborate on quarterly networking events for elected and appointed officials. The next networking event will occur on Thursday, October 30th, at the Greylock Glen Outdoor Center from 5 to 7 pm. Our special guest will be Inspector General Jeffery Shapiro. Please register in advance on [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com).

H. Small Clean Energy Infrastructure Facility Siting and Permitting Regulations

The Massachusetts Department of Energy Resource's (DOER) new Division of Siting and Permitting filed draft regulations for siting and permitting of small renewable energy infrastructure. These encompass renewable energy sources (< 25MW), storage (< 100MWh), and transmission lines (< 10 miles). These regulations are also accompanied by draft site suitability guidance and guidance for community benefit agreements.

Written comments on the draft regulations will be accepted through October 17th to this email: DOER.Siting.Permitting@mass.gov, subject line: "S&P Follow On Rulemaking Comments.

There will be a series of in-person information sessions throughout the state including one on Thursday, October 9th, 7 p.m. at UMass Amherst (551 North Pleasant St., Amherst, Olver Design Building)

In addition, there will be a virtual public hearing on Zoom October 15th at 7 p.m. Register [here](#).

I. Site Suitability Assessments for Clean Energy Infrastructure Guidance / Draft Standards and Guidelines, Community Benefits Plans, Community Benefits Agreements

The draft Small Clean Energy Infrastructure Facility Siting and Permitting Regulations reference seven different guidance documents, which articulate many of the baseline conditions and requirements for the application, review, and approval processes.

The Site Suitability Assessment Guidance describes the methodology for determining the suitability of sites for energy infrastructure.

The Community Benefits Guidance describes how a proposed energy facility should engage the Community.

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs is holding a public webinar on Oct. 9 at noon to explain its draft Guidance on Site Suitability Assessments for Clean Energy Infrastructure and the Office of Environmental Justice and Equity's draft Standards and Guidelines for Community Benefits Plans and Agreements. These will impact both the local and state siting and permitting process. Registration is at [Webinar Registration - Zoom](#)

Feedback on the draft site suitability guidance can be submitted to EnergyPermitting@mass.gov through Oct. 24, 2025.

J. FFIO's new Municipal and Tribal Technical Assistance (MTTA) Grant Program

This competitive grant program is designed for all Massachusetts local governments and federally recognized tribes, as well as regional organizations whose membership is exclusively composed of municipal governments, community development corporations and other development authorities or agencies seeking technical assistance for infrastructure, climate, and economic development projects. To qualify for funding under this program, applications must be intended for projects that are seeking or have received federal funding. This program prioritizes requests from rural communities, Gateway Cities, and localities with financial and capacity needs in similar underserved communities. Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis by the FFIO, and successful applicants will receive up-front funding. [More information is available on the FFIO website.](#)

K. FFIO's new Technical Assistance for Regional Planning Agencies (TARPA) Grant Program

This formula-based grant program is for Regional Planning Agencies (RPAs) with resources for direct technical assistance to cities and towns, particularly for moving infrastructure, climate, and economic development projects forward to help rural communities, Gateway Cities, and localities with financial and capacity needs in similar underserved communities. These projects should have a regional scope and impact. To qualify for funding under this program, applicants must be one of the state's 13 RPAs seeking or have received federal funding. The FFIO oversees the program, which allocates grant funding to the RPAs on an opt-in basis.

L. The Berkshire Housing Coalition

The Berkshire Housing Coalition (BHC) is an open group that shares concern for the availability, affordability, and quality of housing in the Berkshires.

The group is administered by Hearthway, Inc., the county's regional housing organization that exists to find housing solutions for all people across the Berkshires.

BHC members receive regular updates via email on housing advocacy, challenges and solutions, and other important information related to the housing needs of the Berkshires. BHC also meets, as needed, to hear updates from key housing partners and engage in dialogue with other stakeholders and advocates. To join BHC sign up at [Berkshire Housing Coalition | Hearthway](#).

There will be a meeting at Berkshire Community College on 10/23 for this, hosted by BRPC, Hearthway and Upside413.

IX. Old Business

A. Discussion about EPA's Proposed Changes to its Endangerment Finding

EPA's Endangerment Finding is the basis for regulating Greenhouse Gas emissions. The BRPC Executive Committee approved submitting comments from BRPC at the September meeting. Several members of the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies also submitted comments, which I also signed.

B. Discussion about the Environmental Bond Bill

At the September Executive Committee meeting interest was expressed about getting a summary of the Environmental Bond Bill. That summary was attached.

Christine Rasmussen provided a summary for the last executive committee meeting.

C. Discussion about the BRPC Annual Meeting on October 16th

We have reserved the Proprietors' Lodge in Pittsfield for Thursday, October 16, 2025, as the date for our annual meeting. Please reserve your tickets prior to October 9th on [Eventbrite](#). The Annual Meeting will include presentation of the 2025 Kusik Award to the following four honorees: Meg Bandarra, Unpaved Trails for All; Ellen Kennedy, Berkshire Community College; Jane Winn, BEAT; and Rene Wood, Town of Sheffield.

Attendance is currently in the mid 40's. Will need a head count by 10/9.

X. New Business

A. Discussion about the Resignation of BRPC Treasurer and Executive Committee member John Duval

The Commission Chair received notice that John Duval has stepped down from being Adam's Alternate, the BRPC Executive Committee and BRPC Treasurer role. Doug suggested a Commission Development Committee to discuss the Treasurer's position. It is preferable to fill the Treasurer position by the November Commission meeting. John Duval was thanked for his service on the Commission in all roles.

B. Vote to Approve the Executive Director's FY 25 Performance Review and FY 26 Salary Adjustment

BRPC's Bylaws require "On an annual basis, the Executive Director shall prepare a review of his/her accomplishments for the preceding year and goals for the upcoming years as part of his/her performance evaluation by the

Executive Committee."

Several comments were offered: Malcolm gave Tom a well done and Sheila also said Tom has been doing a great job involving the staff in getting things done, bringing on Laura, and Christine stated she has learned a lot from Tom.

Doug McNally made a motion to accept the Executive Director's Performance review as presented. This motion was seconded by Christine Rasmussen and approved by affirmative vote from Malcolm Fick, Buck Donovan, Sheila Irvin, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, Sam Haupt, and Doug McNally.

BRPC salaries are based on performance reviews. The Executive Committee is requested to approve the Executive Director's FY 24 Performance Review and any FY 25 Salary Adjustment.

Doug McNally moved to approve a performance of an "exceptional" level and deserved the 3% salary increase retroactive to July 1, 2025. Christine Rasmussen seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed with affirmative votes from Malcolm Fick, Buck Donovan, Sheila Irvin, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, Sam Haupt and Doug McNally.

C. Discussion about the Executive Director's Retirement Notice and Hiring Process for the Next Executive Director

There was discussion about the hiring process that was used in 2017 – 2018, a suggestion to review that process and use it as a basis for this search, a question if the BRPC Bylaws allow a search committee to be formed, a question about the scope of advertising. The Chair indicated that the Commission should work on this as soon as possible as the Executive Director would like to retire in March. A suggestion was made that the Executive Committee prepare an outline of the process for the Commission meeting and highlight the meeting that the search process would be on the agenda.

D. Discussion about Topics for the November 20 Commission Meeting

Potential topics for November 20, 2025, Commission Meeting include:

- Potential for Comments on Regulations
- Roundtable Discussion of Municipal Items
- Review the Hiring Process for the Next Executive Director's Search and Define the Search Committee.
- Overview of the BRPC Program Areas
- State and Federal Budget Overview

XI. Adjournment

Kyle Hanlon made a motion to adjourn. Doug McNally seconded the motion. The motion passed with affirmative votes from Malcolm Fick, Buck Donovan, Sheila Irvin, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, Sam Haupt, and Doug McNally.

The meeting adjourned at 5:08PM.

Additional Meeting Material:

- 2025.09.04 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes – Unapproved DRAFT
- 2025.08.27 – 2025.09.18 Expenditures Report

- 2025.09 Accounts Receivable Report
- 2025.09 Line of Credit Report
- 2025.09.26 Executive Director Memorandum
- DRAFT – Continuation of Medical Benefits After Retirement - Policy
- Resumes – Caitlin Davis, James Massey, Jennifer Sweet
- Comments on Proposed Rule Rescission Docket No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2025-019
- Environmental Bond Bill Summary
- August 2025 – Technical Assistance Memorandum