



**APPROVED Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Executive Committee Minutes
Thursday, November 6, 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.

Roll Call: Caitlin Davis, Office Administrator, read the roll call:

Members Present:

Malcolm Fick, Chair, Great Barrington Alternate

Buck Donovan, Vice Chair, Lee Delegate-joined meeting at 4:51PM

Sheila Irvin, Berkshire Brownfields Committee Chair, Pittsfield Delegate

Mark Smith, Environmental Review Committee Chair, Lenox 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

Others Present:

Alvin Blake, Becket, Delegate

Mary McGurn, Egremont, Delegate

Laura Mensi, Monterey, Delegate

Kate Fletcher, Stockbridge, Delegate

Staff Present:

Tom Matuszko, Executive Director

Laura Brennan, Assistant Director

Marianne Sniezek, Office Manager

Caitlin Davis, Office Administrator

II. Vote to Approve the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of October 2, 2025, Minutes

Doug McNally motioned to approve the October 2, 2025, meeting minutes with the changes to the dates. Kyle Hanlon seconded the motion. Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, Sam Haupt and Doug McNally all voted affirmatively. Mark Smith abstained.

III. Financial Reports and Discussion

A. Vote to Approve the September 19, 2025 – October 28, 2025, Expenditures Report

Sheila Irvin motioned to approve the September 19, 2025 – October 28, 2025, expenditures report. Sam Haupt seconded the motion.

There was no discussion

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

B. Report on the Accounts Receivable October 2025

Tom reported that some items were paid- City of Pittsfield that was 90 days overdue and a small \$25 fee. Malcolm Fick noticed a totaling error in the 90-day overdue column of the report. A correct report will be provided.

C. Report on the Line of Credit – September 2025

No comment on this item.

D. Report on Federally Funded Contracts

Tom reported FHWA will not include any comments on working with ICE in their contracts following a lawsuit that was filed by many states and a permanent decision made November 5th. Tom also reported there was no evidence to withhold or claw back federal funds. He also reported that we were getting some payments from EPA.

IV. Open Comments from Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

Delegates and Alternate Delegates not to be further discussed at this meeting by the Executive Committee.

Kate Fletcher asked if meeting minutes going forward could reflect who is speaking on specific topics and comments.

Al Blake, delegate from Becket, had some comments Tom read that were more related to the executive director's report (which were included in that section of the meeting).

V. Items Requiring Action

A. Vote to Ratify the Submission of a Grant Application to the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) FY25 Community and Schools Youth Drug Prevention Program*

The Executive Committee was requested to ratify the submission of a grant application to the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) FY25 Community and Schools Youth Drug Prevention Program and authorize the Executive Director to sign any resulting contracts and agreements. This three-year grant opportunity offers up to \$750,000 to support school-based youth substance use prevention in coordination with law enforcement and community coalitions. BRPC proposes to expand the SPARK (Supporting Positive Actions for Resilience & Knowledge) Coalition's presence in Pittsfield Public Schools and Central Berkshire Regional School District by deepening partnerships with the schools and public safety, enhancing peer mental health supports, and launching youth-led campaigns to address substance use norms. There is no match required. There would be subcontractors. BRPC contacts are Andy Ottoson, aottoson@berkshireplanning.org and Noé González Ortiz NGonzalezOrtiz@berkshireplanning.org.

Doug McNally moved to ratify the submission of a grant application to the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

(OJJDP) FY25 Community and Schools Youth Drug Prevention Program and authorize the Executive Director to sign any resulting contracts and agreements. Mark Smith seconded the motion.

Doug McNally made a comment that he thought the proposal was addressing the underlying causes of the problems rather than punishment.

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

B. Vote to Ratify the Submission of a Grant Application to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection MS4 Municipal Assistance Grant Program *

The Executive Committee was requested to ratify the submission of a grant application to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection MS4 Municipal Assistance Grant Program and authorize the Executive Director to sign any resulting contracts and agreements. This grant would provide off-the-shelf readily implementable BMP designs, as well as the background information to siting and amendments, to Massachusetts MS4 operators so that they can more easily integrate structural BMPs into ongoing capital improvements and other publicly funded projects. Partners include the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission with input from members of the Connecticut River Stormwater Committee, Dalton Stormwater Commission and the regulated MS4 communities in Berkshire County. There would also be a subcontracted stormwater engineer. The amount requested is \$63,225. There is no required match. BRPC contact is Alison Dixon, adixon@berkshireplanning.org.

Before the vote, Kate Fletcher asked for a quick summary. Tom reported as it was explained in the write up, the grant is to provide off the shelf designs, culverts and structural BMPs so that communities can implement these in a more efficient, low-cost way. Doug McNally stated lots of towns have put in culverts and a lot of them could be prefabricated. Kate Fletcher asked a question about stormwater treatment. Tom reported it did. Christine Rasmussen stated that towns should have models to choose from for the construction of a school.

Doug McNally moved to authorize the Submission of a Grant Application to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection MS4 Municipal Assistance Grant Program and authorize the Executive Director to sign any resulting contracts and agreements. Kyle Hanlon seconded the motion.

There was no discussion on the motion

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

C. Vote to Submit a Grant Application to the Massachusetts Office of Behavioral Health Promotion and Prevention (OBHPP) Grant for Behavioral Health Promotion and Prevention under the Tier A funding category*

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the Massachusetts Office of Behavioral Health Promotion and Prevention (OBHPP) Grant for Behavioral Health Promotion and

Prevention under the Tier A funding category and sign any resulting contracts and agreements. The initial grant period is 17 months, with a total funding amount of \$212,500. The grant includes options to renew every two years at \$150,000 annually. Additionally, there is potential to apply for advancement to Tier B (\$250,000/year) or Tier C (\$350,000/year) based on program performance and OBHPP approval. The proposed project will implement a Community EMS program in partnership with Southern Berkshire Ambulance, County Ambulance Services, and Northern Berkshire EMS. These agencies will serve as key subcontracted partners, each dedicating 0.2 FTE to the initiative. The program will focus on preventive outreach services to reduce loneliness and alcohol use while promoting physical wellbeing among older adults (65+) in Berkshire County. There is no BRPC required match. There would be additional subcontractors. BRPC contact is Andy Ottoson (aottoson@berkshireplanning.org)

Doug McNally moved to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the Massachusetts Office of Behavioral Health Promotion and Prevention (OBHPP) Grant for Behavioral Health Promotion and Prevention under the Tier A funding category and sign any resulting contracts and agreements. Kyle Hanlon seconded the motion.

Kate Fletcher asked what the grant amount was. Malcolm Fick reminded her that that information was included in the meeting material.

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

D. Vote to Submit a Grant Application to the Massachusetts Office of Behavioral Health Promotion and Prevention (OBHPP) Grant for Behavioral Health Promotion and Prevention under the Tier B funding category*

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the Massachusetts Office of Behavioral Health Promotion and Prevention (OBHPP) Grant for Behavioral Health Promotion and Prevention under the Tier B funding category and sign any resulting contracts and agreements. The initial grant period is 17 months, with a total funding amount of \$354,167. The grant includes options to renew every two years at \$250,000 annually, with potential advancement to Tier C (\$350,000/year) based on program performance and OBHPP approval. The proposed project will expand SPARK's youth mental health promotion and substance misuse prevention efforts in Pittsfield. Key components include teen-led vaping and Positive Childhood Experiences (PCE) education for 4th and 5th graders, expansion of the "Cheer Without the Cheers" campaign to reduce adult alcohol consumption, and new efforts to further reduce adolescent alcohol and cannabis use. There is no BRPC required match. Subcontractors are expected to include Berkshire AHEC, Solasta Strategies, and Kate Hocker Design. BRPC contacts are Andy Ottoson (aottoson@berkshireplanning.org) and Noé González Ortiz (NGonzalezOrtiz@berkshireplanning.org).

Sam Haupt moved to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the Massachusetts Office of Behavioral Health Promotion and

Prevention (OBHPP) Grant for Behavioral Health Promotion and Prevention under the Tier B funding category and sign any resulting contracts and agreements. Doug McNally seconded the motion.

There was no discussion on the motion.

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

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

The Executive Committee was requested to approve BRPC's updated Continuation of Medical Benefits After Retirement policy. The changes from our current Continuation of Medical Benefits After Retirement Policy specify eligibility for retirement as being consistent with the Massachusetts State Employee Retirement System (MSERS), clarify pre-retirement plan benefit requirements, clarify language around a surrounding spouse, specify retirees must enter into the MSERS immediately after separation from employment with BRPC, and require prompt retiree share payments. There is no change to the major substantive issue of the contribution rate.

Mark Smith moved to approve the BRPC's updated Continuation of Medical Benefits After Retirement Policy. Sheila Irvin seconded the motion.

There was no discussion on the motion.

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

VI. Committee Updates, Reports and Discussion

A. Commission Development Committee

The Commission Development Committee did not meet in October 2025. The next meeting is November 12, 2025.

B. Environmental Review Committee

The Environmental Review Committee did not meet in October 2025.

C. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee did not meet in October 2025.

D. Regional Issues Committee

The Regional Issues Committee met on October 15, 2025. The main agenda item was discussion of the draft regulations for Small Clean Energy Infrastructure Facility Siting and Permitting leading to the authorization to submit comments. There was a presentation From Allison Gage, Department of Energy Resources (DOER) Siting and Permitting Regional Coordinator for the Western Region. Those comments were included in the meeting material. Also included in the meeting material was a legislative summary prepared by Regional Issues Committee Chair, Christine Rasmussen. Christien Rasmussen also reported on planned cuts to state government. Draft minutes of the October 15th meeting were not yet available.

E. Berkshire Brownfield Committee

The Berkshire Brownfield Committee did not meet in October 2025.

Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Committee (MPO)

The MPO did not meet in October 2025.

F. Comprehensive Economic Development (CEDS) Committee

The CEDS Committee did not meet in October 2025.

G. Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

The Transportation Advisory Committee did not meet in October 2025.

VII. Executive Director's Report and Discussion

Items from the Executive Director's report are listed below. If there was discussion on an item it is reflected in the minutes otherwise no discussion.

A. Report on New Contracts/Agreements

B. Berkshires Tomorrow Inc. (BTI) Update

C. Staff Updates

D. Seasonal Communities Advisory Council Update

Al Blake included a comment to be read about towns voting on becoming seasonal communities and if there were plans to hold informational sessions for those towns to help with the decision-making process. Tom reported he was not aware of the Seasonal Community Advisory Commission holding sessions, but if there was interest in the communities, BRPC could do that. Tom also reported that he thought not having regulations was a deterrent to towns adopting the designation. Mark Smith reported that Lenox was waiting for more specifics.

E. Passenger Rail

F. MMA Report: A Perfect Storm: Cities and Towns Face Historic Fiscal Pressures

G. Citizen Planner Training Collaborative (CPTC) Fall/Winter Workshops

H. Draft Clean Energy Model Bylaws

Al Blake made a comment the BESS Bylaws will be finalized in March 2026, and versions will be passed in late 2026. In a recent meeting with our DOER Western Union representative, she was asked what support we could expect from her organization, and she suggested contacting BRPC. Tom reported that EOHLIC is working on model bylaws that the communities could adopt, like other model bylaws. BRPC is available to help. BRPC's comments said the 2026 date was unreasonable.

I. Online version of State Housing Plan

J. Municipal Empowerment Act Support

Malcolm Fick urged members to review the support letter for the Municipal Empowerment Act that was included in the PACKET

K. Waiver of Notice Request- Proposed Agricultural Preservation Restriction New Marlborough

Tom received a request to reduce the 120-day notice period to 60 days for a proposed Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) on the

244.9-acre Edward B. Goodnow Revocable Trust property along Keyes Hill Road in New Marlborough. Tom reported he had reached out to the town and will base his decision on what the towns does

L. Community one Stop for Growth Awards

Malcolm Fick commented on the extensive awards coming in to the county.

VIII. Old Business

A. Discussion about the BRPC Annual Meeting

Doug McNally commented that the late afternoon format worked well. Christine Rasmussen stated it was a highly organized, well-run event with a good location and she offered congratulations to the staff who organized and planned the event. Sheila Irvin noted the networking at the beginning was useful. It was generally agreed that the scenery was beautiful as the event started earlier in the late afternoon and that Fred Rutberg was an excellent speaker.

B. Discussion about the BRPC Treasurer Position

Malcolm Fick explained that at the October Executive Committee there was a question about what was involved in the Treasurer position description and that a description was included in the packet. Kate Fletcher commented that the position descriptions should be distributed to the Delegates and Alternates and Tom reminded her that the Delegates and Alternates get the Executive Committee material.

C. Vote to Approve the Description of Responsibilities of the Executive Director to be Used in the Executive Director Search Process

The Executive Committee was requested to approve the description of responsibilities of the Executive Director to be used in the Executive Director Search Process. The BRPC Bylaws state the Executive Committee shall prepare a description of the responsibilities of the BRPC Executive Director.

Mark Smith asked how many applicants there were for the previous search. Kyle Hanlon stated he thought there were 7 or 8.

Kate Fletcher made a comment that interfacing with the Commission would be important and a willingness to look at the structure, especially since it appears several committees were not meeting. Tom reported the Executive Director responsibilities are reviewed at least every 5 years. Doug McNally stated it is a balancing act between involving many members, especially since it is a challenge sometimes to get members, with acting regularly. Tom suggested to add the words "review and" between to and grow on the 5th bullet item under Commission. Christine Rasmussen asked about mileage reimbursement. Tom reported reimbursement is in the BRPC policy.

Doug McNally moved to approve of the Description of Responsibilities of the Executive Director to be Used in the Executive Director Search Process with the inclusion of the words review and. Sam Haupt

seconded the motion.

There was no discussion on the motion

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

D. Vote to Recommend an Executive Director Hiring Process to the Commission at the November 20, 2025, Commission Meeting

The Executive Committee was requested to recommend an Executive Director hiring process to the Commission at the November 20, 2025, Commission meeting. Malcolm Fick reminded all that the Commission is responsible for approving the hiring process. It is the Chair's intention to have the Search Committee Chair, Buck Dononvan, and members approved at the Commission as well. Both the Commission Chair and Search Committee Chair are going to recommend a 7-member committee. The committee members will consist of 4 people from the executive committee, one non-Executive Committee member (John Duval, former BRPC Chair and current select board member in Adams), BRPC staff member (BRPC Public Health Program Manager Laura Kittross who will be retiring in February 2026) and another individual with government experience in Berkshire County (tbd)

Kate Fletcher stated her desire to have the process opened up to the Commission for discussion.

Malcolm Fick stated this process mirrors the process that was used in the 2017-2018 hiring process. It recommends that the hiring process be done internally.

Doug McNally moved to authorize the recommendation of the Executive Director Hiring Process to the Commission at the November 20, 2025, Commission Meeting. Kyle Hanlon seconded the motion.

There was no discussion on the motion

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

IX. New Business

A. Discussion about Topics for the November 20 Commission Meeting

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

- Election of BRPC Treasurer-Sam Haupt (he will not be present at the meeting)
- Creation of the BRPC Executive Director Search Committee
- Approval of the BRPC Executive Director Search Committee Chair and Members as recommended by the Commission Chair
- Approval of an at-large Executive Committee member as recommended by the Commission Chair
- Allow certain BRPC Committees to allow non-Commission members to make up a majority of Committee members
- Roundtable Discussion of Municipal Items
- Potential for Comments on Regulations

- Overview of one BRPC Program Areas (Melissa Provencher, Environmental and Energy Program Manager, was asked to provide an overview)
- State and Federal Budget Overview

Kate Fletcher asked who the proposed Treasurer was going to be. She was told Sam Haupt, who stated he was not available for the meeting on the 20th.

Kate Fletcher requested it would be beneficial to provide a summary of work of committees over the past year, or regular updates on a quarterly basis.

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, Mark Smith, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, Sam Haupt and Doug McNally.

The meeting adjourned at 4:56pm.

Additional Meeting Material:

- 2025.10.02 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes – Unapproved DRAFT
- 2025.09.19 – 2025.10.28 Expenditures Report
- 2025.10 Accounts Receivable Report
- 2025.10 Line of Credit Report
- 2025.11.201 Executive Director Memorandum
- DRAFT – Continuation of Medical Benefits After Retirement Policy
- Legislative Updates November
- Resumes – Anna Youngman
- BRPC- 760 CMT 76 Comments 10.31.25
- Municipal Empowerment Act Support
- Proposed Agricultural Preservation Restriction
- Berkshire County Community One Stop for Growth Awards
- BRPC Responsibilities and Desired Qualities of Officers, At-Large Executive Committee Members, Committee Chairs, and Delegates and Alternates
- BRPC Executive Director Responsibilities
- Proposed Executive Director Hiring Process
- September 2025 – Technical Assistance Memorandum