



APPROVED Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Executive Committee Minutes Thursday, February 5, 2026

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 4:00pm. He stated that BRPC was recording the meeting and said that if anyone else wanted to record it, they needed to inform him. iBerkshires recorded the meeting.

II. Roll Call

Caitlin Davis, Office Administrator, 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-Joined 4:04pm; left 4:45pm
Christine Rasmussen, Regional Issues Committee Chair, Stockbridge Alternate
Sam Haupt, Treasurer, Peru Delegate
Douglas McNally, Commission Development Chair, Windsor Delegate
Mary McGurn, At-Large, Egremont Delegate

Others Present:

Al Blake, Becket, Delegate
Kate Fletcher, Stockbridge, Delegate
Virginia Riehl, Planning Board, North Adams
Brittany Polito, iBerkshires
James, Citizen

Not Present:

Mark Smith, Environmental Review Committee Chair, Lenox Delegate

Staff Present:

Tom Matuszko, Executive Director
Laura Brennan, Assistant Director
Marianne Sniezek, Office Manager
Caitlin Davis, Office Administrator
James Massey, Public Health Inspector

III. Vote to Approve the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of January 8, 2026, Minutes

Doug McNally motioned to approve the January 8, 2026 meeting minutes. Mary McGurn seconded the motion.

There was no discussion on the motion.

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

IV. Financial Reports and Discussion

A. Vote to Approve the December 30, 2025 – January 28, 2026, Expenditures Report

Doug McNally motioned to approve the **December 30, 2025 – January 28, 2026**, expenditures report. Sheila Irvin seconded the motion.

There was no discussion on the motion.

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

B. Report on the Accounts Receivable January 2026

Tom reported that a few over 90 day bills had been paid, including the payment for Sunoco. The outstanding payment for Bay State is still in process.

Doug commented that the \$1600 digital grant Windsor received would still be paid even though they did not use the funds.

C. Report on the Line of Credit – January 2026

The line of credit is still at zero.

II. 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 made a comment about the Healy Administration's interest in road tax. With the increase in electric cars, gas was not a huge need. Kate asked if this were a topic that could be brought to the next Commission meeting. Tom did not have more information on this but would consider it a future meeting topic.

III. Items Requiring Action

A. Vote to Ratify the Submission of 4 Grant Applications to the Franklin Regional Council of Governments related to Crisis & Emergency Risk Communication (CERC) plans for Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden, and Hampshire Counties

The Executive Committee was requested to ratify the submission of four grant applications to Franklin Regional Council of Governments related to Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication (CERC) Plans for Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden, and Hampshire Counties and authorize the Executive

Director to sign any resulting contracts and agreements. This work would develop train and workshop Crisis & Emergency Risk Communication (CERC) Plans for the four county Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) Coalitions in Western MA. The four counties each have a separate RFP for their CERC Plan, so BRPC may be awarded some, none or all the applications. The amounts of the applications are Berkshire County, \$28,500, Franklin County, \$30,000, Hampden County, \$45,500, and Hampshire County \$35,500. No match is required. The staff lead is Public Health Subject Matter Expert Sandra Martin, smartin@berkshireplanning.org.

Mary McGurn moved to approve ratification submission of four Grant Applications to Franklin Regional Council of Governments related to Crisis & Emergency Risk Communication(CERC) plans for Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden, and Hampshire Counties. Buck Donovan seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion.

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

IV. Committee Updates, Reports and Discussion

A. Commission Development Committee

The Commission Development Committee did not meet in January. The next meeting was February 5, 2026. Doug McNally commented on the amended bylaws.

B. Environmental Review Committee

The Environmental Review Committee meets as needed and did not need to meet in January 2026.

C. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee met on January 29, 2026. The primary topic was a presentation of the FY2025 Audit by Adelson & Company PC and approval. The FY2025 audit had no findings and no recommendations.

The other approval was to allow Automatic Clearing House (ACH) payments with prior Executive Director approval for monthly rent per BRPC leases and utilities reimbursement, Berkshires Tomorrow Invoices per BRPC and BTI agreements, Massachusetts State Retirement for semi-monthly retirement deductions from employee's pay, and the MIIA Health Benefits Trust for monthly health and dental benefits.

Unapproved draft minutes were included in the meeting material.

D. Regional Issues Committee

The Regional Issues Committee did not meet in January 2026.

Christine Rasmussen provided a legislative report for January 2026. She referenced the population decline in MA from 2024-2025. She also mentioned the high Medicare cost and potential high taxes.

E. Berkshire Brownfield Committee

The Berkshire Brownfield Committee meets as needed and did not meet in January 2026.

F. Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Committee (MPO)

The MPO typically meets virtually on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 4:00 pm. The MPO did not have a quorum on January 27th, 2026. The next meeting will be February 24th, 2026.

G. Comprehensive Economic Development (CEDS) Committee

The CEDS Committee meets quarterly and met on January 21, 2026. The main agenda topic was discussion of the Year 3 Performance Progress Report, including a review of the timeline, a SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threats) analysis, and a request for new priority projects.

Laura Brennan gave an update that the US Census released data the committee was waiting on to review further.

H. Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

The Transportation Advisory Committee meets as needed, primarily to advise on the TIP development process and will start meeting now as the TIP is being developed. The next meeting for TAC is scheduled for February 17th, 2026. Kate Fletcher asked who the best contact would be concerning issues with Route 7 railings and the poor shape they are in, as she had not made any headway with MassDOT, Region 1 or Paul Mark. Doug McNally suggested reaching out to the town highway superintendent.

V. Executive Director's Report and Discussion

A. Report on New Contracts/Agreements

New Grants and Contracts received/initiated from 12/30/25 – 1/28/26

- Becket – Digital Equity Implementation – Additional \$7,500
- Great Barrington – Digital Equity Implementation – Additional \$3,950
- Lee – Digital Equity Implementation – Additional \$5,750
- Inspired Breath - Community Catalyst Participation – \$10,150
- Executive Office of Housing & Living Communities - Berkshire County Buildout Analysis - \$138,600
- Lenox - Housing Production Plan - \$25,000
- Merrimack Valley Planning Commission - Municipal Addressing - \$32,700
- Peru - Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness - \$20,000

Grants and Contracts not received

- We are not aware of any unsuccessful grant applications for this period.

B. Berkshires Tomorrow Inc. (BTI) Update

The BTI Board approved the following:

- Approved the Submission of a Grant Application to Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation's 2026 Planning and Technical Assistance Grant Program for \$5,000 to support strategic planning

for Berkshires Tomorrow, Inc., including refinement of its statement of purpose and the development of a formal mission statement. No match is required; however, BTI would invest an additional \$5,000 in strategic planning, bringing the total project budget to \$10,000. BRPC contact is Laura Brennan, lbrennan@berkshireplanning.org.

- Approved the FY2025 President, Malcolm Fick, to sign the Mass PC form and BTI's 2025 tax return instead of John Duval, who was listed as the Treasurer in FY2025. The tax return will be prepared by our accountant, Adelson & Company PC.
- Approved the acceptance of a donation from John DeRosa for \$5,000, and for the BTI President to sign any necessary agreements. A 2% administrative fee will be charged on the donation. The funds are to support the Into Light exhibition, which seeks to reduce stigma around the opioid epidemic through portraits and stories of local lives lost to overdose. The BRPC contact is Andy Ottoson at aottoson@berkshireplanning.org. The Executive Director, Tom Matuszko, will sign any agreements with BRPC. There may be additional private donors for this project.
- Approved the Submission of a Grant Application to the EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity for the FY 2026 Environmental Justice Capacity Building Grant. The submission was \$46,556.88. The board also authorized the President to sign an agreement if awarded. Berkshire Funding Focus would moderate a series of seven workshops to help build the capacity of small nonprofit organizations led by and/or serving Environmental Justice populations. BRPC contact is Karen Pelto, kpelto@berkshireplanning.org.

C. Staff Updates

Open Positions:

- Public Health Trainer

D. Seasonal Communities Advisory Council Update

The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) held a virtual information session on Seasonal Communities designation's goals, benefits, requirements, funding opportunities, and updates Wednesday February 4, 2026 at 5:00 pm.

There were fifty-seven attendees at the meeting on February 4th. Christine Rasmussen mentioned how well done the session went considering what a complicated issue this was. She was concerned about the residents on wheels being something that might be hard to sell. Malcolm Fick stated that the conclusion was that tiny homes on wheels were not required, but the tiny homes without wheels were a requirement.

Mary McGurn also commented that the presenter was very open, provided information and were there to listen. There were a lot of town

specifics that could not be addressed during the meeting but there was a lot of work that needed to be done by the towns to figure out how to deal with this issue.

Kate Fletcher asked if there was a recording of the meeting available. Mary McGurn recorded the meeting and would be sharing a summary for her select board and was happy to share with anyone who was interested.

The next Seasonal Communities Advisory Council meeting is scheduled as a virtual meeting on Tuesday February 10, 2026, at 11:00 am.

E. Passenger Rail

- [West-East Rail](#) – No update.
- [Berkshire Flyer](#) – No update.
- [Northern Tier Passenger Rail](#) – No update.

More information on these items can be found at [Compass Rail | Mass.gov](#).

F. Community One Stop for Growth

The FY27 Round of the Community One Stop for Growth is now open. Prospective applicants may log into the [IGX system](#) to begin working on their Full Application(s). The One Stop will begin accepting Full Application submissions on May 4, 2026. The submission deadline is Wednesday, June 3, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. Information is at www.mass.gov/onestop. Questions may be directed to onestop@mass.gov.

G. Environment & Climate One Stop (ECO One Stop)

The FY27 ECO One Stop Application is now open. Applications are due by Friday, March 20, 2026. The ECO One Stop is a simplified, single point of entry for various climate and environmental resilience grants, including the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Action Grant, Cooling Corridors Program, Planning Assistance Grants, and the Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Grant. Information is at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/environment-climate-one-stop>. Direct questions to ecoonestop@mass.gov.

H. Small Clean Energy Infrastructure Facility Siting and Permitting Regulations

The Department of Energy Resources (DOER) released [Clean Energy Regs](#) on January 13, 2026. As stated in these regulations, municipalities must accept Consolidated Local Permit Applications for eligible renewable energy systems no later than October 1, 2026. Municipalities may, but are not required to, accept Consolidated Local Permit Applications between July 1, 2026 and September 30, 2026 (225 CMR 29.00).

Municipalities need to plan how they will manage **the Consolidated Local Permits process**. Every municipality will need to identify a Local Government Representative to manage the Consolidated Permit process. Various municipal boards, Planning Boards, ZBAs, Conservation

Commissions, and Boards of Health will be part of that process. All local permits need to be acted on within 12 months after receipt of the application or else face constructive approval

Municipalities have between July 1st and September 30th to enact new bylaws or ordinances that comply with the new Clean Energy Regulations. Malcolm Fick mentioned that because there was a deadline coming up for enacting new bylaws, the municipalities would need to figure out how the consolidated the local permit process would work.

Tom mentioned that the communities were supposed to establish a point of contact that the town applicants would go through. The permits would start coming in the summer and by October 1st the developers would come in. DOER would schedule an informational session, so if there were any questions the municipalities had, to send them in advance.

I. Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Proposed Acquisition of an Interest of Land

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is considering the acquisition of an interest in approximately 215 acres of land in the Towns of Clarksburg and Florida. The property is currently undeveloped woodland. The proposed use for the property will be protected open space to be incorporated into Florida State Forest. Included in the meeting material was a locus map marked "Exhibit A" which shows the property in which DCR is interested.

J. Rural and Small Town Housing Choice Communities Designation

The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities launched a new Rural and Small Town Housing Choice Communities Designation. Those municipalities on this list, [Rural and Small Towns](#), are eligible to qualify for Housing Choice Initiative Designation under this new designation. General information is located at [Housing Choice Initiative Designation | Mass.gov](#). Eligibility and criteria to meet this designation are located here, [criteria and best practices](#). McKenzie Bell, mckenzie.bell@mass.gov, is the EOHLC contact.

This rural program would refer to populations under 7,000, as most of the communities in rural and Western MA under the previous housing choice program were not eligible. Tom mentioned he sent a notice to the alternates and delegates regarding the MAPC session that will be held March 9th. Kate Fletcher expressed interest in attending the session.

K. New Department of Justice Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Requirements

Beginning April 24, 2026 new ADA accessibility standards for web content and mobile applications will be required for large public entities (50,000+ residents). In addition to our primary website, every digital aspect, including documents posted on our website, will need to meet accessibility standards. Small public entities, including the planning commission and small towns, will need to comply starting April 26, 2027. A summary article was included in the meeting material.

Mary McGurn mentioned she was glad to see this as her town's (EGR) website admin. She sent a thirteen page briefing to the town's select board about wanting it to be more accessible.

Laura Brennan stated she would be happy to talk this through in order for websites, documents etc. to meet expectations. She shared the following link, opportunities for town staff and volunteers to take trainings for documents and websites.

<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/accessibility-center-for-consulting-education-and-support-services/events>

L. Berkshire Gas Proposed Price Increases

Berkshire Gas is proposing significant price increases. The Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities, which regulates price increases, has scheduled listening session about the proposed increases. A remote listening session will be held at 7:00 pm, February 4, 2026, <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88691149217>, or dial in at 1 305 224 1968 (not toll free) and enter the Webinar ID: 886 9114 9217. An in-person session will be held at 7:00 pm on February 5, 2026, at Berkshire Community College's Boland Theater on 1350 West Street.

M. Technical Assistance Report

The December technical assistance report was included with the meeting materials.

VI. Old Business and Discussion

A. Update and Discussion about the Executive Director Search Process

The BRPC Executive Director Search Committee met three times since the last Executive Committee meeting on January 14th, January 23rd, and January 31st. The Committee evaluated the material submitted by the applicants and rated them for initial interviews. The first set of initial interviews were conducted on the 31st, with another set of initial interviews scheduled for February 7th. After these initial interviews, a smaller subset of applicants will be invited for in-person second interviews. For the second set of interviews, applicants will be in-person, and the meeting will be held in open session. There will be a remote option. Delegates and Alternates are encouraged to attend the meeting where those interviews occur. Finally, the Commission will vote on the selection of the next Executive Director at a future Commission meeting.

Buck Donovan, the chair of the search committee, reported the final round of first interviews would be completed February 7th and that the search was still meeting the proposed timeline. The second round of interviews would be done hybrid. Kate Fletcher asked how many applicants they received and if meeting any of the applicants offline would be possible. They received nine in total, eight were considered and five were brought in for the first round of interviews. Malcolm Fick commented that alternates and delegates could sit in on the second round interviews.

VII. New Business and Discussion

A. Discussion about Topics for the March 19 Commission Meeting

Potential topics for the March 2026 Commission Meeting include:

- Possible Vote on the Incoming Executive Director
- Vote on Bylaw Amendments
- Presentation about the BRPC Community Planning and Development Program
- Roundtable Discussion of Municipal Items

Tom suggested a separate commission meeting could be considered just to vote on the next Executive director. The second round interviews would be conducted by the search committee, but alternates and delegates could sit in on the interviews. The executive committee considered this suggestion because otherwise the meeting could run long.

Christine Rasmussen also suggested adding a topic about inviting legislators to a future meeting.

XI. Adjournment

Sam Haupt made a motion to adjourn. Buck Donovan seconded the motion.

The motion passed without discussion from: Malcolm Fick, Buck Donovan, Sheila Irvin, Christine Rasmussen, Sam Haupt, Doug McNally, and Mary McGurn.

The meeting adjourned at 4:49pm.

Documents and Exhibits used:

- 2026.08.26 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes – Unapproved DRAFT
- 2025.12.30 – 2026.02.28 Expenditures Report
- 2026.01 Accounts Receivable Report
- 2026.01 Line of Credit Report
- 2026.02.01 Executive Director Memorandum
- 2026.01.29 BRPC Finance Committee Meeting Minutes – Unapproved draft
- 2026.02 Legislative Report
- Exhibit A - DCR Proposed Acquisition of an Interest in Land
- Dept. of Justice ADA Requirement Article
- December 2025 – Technical Assistance Memorandum