



APPROVED FULL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES **March 19, 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. Opening

A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:02pm.

Chair Malcolm Fick stated that, in accordance with the provisions of the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law: *Meetings of the BRPC Commission Committee are recorded. Others may record meetings after informing the Chair that they wish to do so, as long as the method of recording does not interfere with the conduct of the meeting.*

Breanna Steele from iBerkshires and David Cachat from PCTV both recorded the meeting. Carin Upstill had an AI notetaker transcribing the meeting.

B. Roll Call

The following Commission members were present:

- Jay Meczywor-Adams Alternate
- Al Blake- Becket Delegate
- Pedro Pachano-Great Barrington Delegate
- Malcolm Fick-Great Barrington Alternate
- Mark Hawthorne-Lanesborough Alternate
- Buck Donovan-Lee Delegate
- Mark Smith-Lenox Delegate
- Daniel Bross-Lenox Alternate
- Laura Mensi-Monterey Delegate
- Lisa Blackmer-North Adams Alternate
- Sam Haupt-Peru Delegate, *joined 7:29pm*
- Sheila Irvin-Pittsfield Delegate
- Justine Dodds-Pittsfield Alternate
- Sari Hoy-Sheffield Delegate
- Christine Rasmussen-Stockbridge Alternate
- Carol Hardy-Fanta-Tyringham Delegate
- Sarah Gardner-Williamstown Alternate
- Doug McNally- Windsor Delegate

Towns with no Delegate or Alternate present: Alford, Cheshire, Clarksburg, Dalton, Florida, Hancock, Hinsdale, Mt. Washington, New Ashford, New

Marlborough, Otis, Peru, Richmond, Sandisfield, Savoy, Washington, West Stockbridge

Staff Present: Thomas Matuszko, Marianne Sniezek, Laura Brennan, Caitlin Davis, Clete Kus, Linda Ludwig, Karen Pelto

Others Present: John Duval, Former Adams Delegate, Stacey Carver, Carin Upstill, David Cachat, PCTV, Breanna Steele, iBerkshires

C. Vote to Approve Minutes of the January 15 Commission Meeting

Doug McNally motioned to approve the January 15, 2026, draft meeting minutes. Buck Donovan seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion.

A roll call vote approved it: Jay Meczywor, Al Blake, Pedro Pachano, Malcolm Fick, Mark Hawthorne, Buck Donovan, Mark Smith, Daniel Bross, Laura Mensi, Lisa Blackmer, Sheila Irvin, Justine Dodds, Sari Hoy, Christine Rasmussen, Carol Hardy-Fanta and Doug McNally. Sarah Gardner abstained.

II. Comments from Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Delegates and Alternate Delegates

BRPC Delegates & Alternates were offered the opportunity to comment on any item not on the agenda. Discussion or action is referred to a future meeting.

There were no comments from Delegates or Alternates.

III. Comments from the Public

Members of the public were offered the opportunity to comment regarding topics on the agenda or other matters they wish to bring to the Commission's attention. Commenters must state their names and the city or town they are from. Any discussion or action is referred to a future meeting.

There were no comments from the public.

IV. Discussion and Vote to Select Laura Brennan as the Incoming Executive Director of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

The BRPC Executive Director Search Committee had conducted an extensive process to present two candidates to the Commission for consideration as the next BRPC Executive Director. Subsequent to the Search Committee's recommendation, one of the candidates withdrew their candidacy. Commission Delegates or Alternate Delegates were asked to vote on Laura Brennan as the next BRPC Executive Director.

Buck Donovan, search committee chair, gave a brief overview of the search process over the last few months. This included the approved job description; the interview rounds and a brief summary of the candidates that were considered. Buck mentioned there were several qualified candidates and most of them were not local to Berkshire County.

The search committee members mentioned it was a thorough, fair process. Malcolm reiterated there were a good group of candidates in the first round interviews.

Mark Smith, who attended several of the search committee meetings, commented that it was an excellent process. There were clear expectations and full transparency throughout the process.

Laura Mensi commented that after watching the interview videos, Laura stood out very well. Christine Rasmussen also gave a thank you to the search committee for their hard work.

Other Commission members, BRPC staff and the public did not make any comments.

Buck Donovan motioned to select Laura Brennan as the Incoming Executive Director of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. Doug McNally seconded the motion.

Pedro Pachano asked Laura if she still wanted the position, to which Laura responded absolutely. Laura Mensi commented that in watching the interview videos, Laura stood out among the candidates and deserved the position. Christine Rasmussen gave thanks to the search committee for their work on this.

A roll call vote approved: Jay Meczywor, Al Blake, Pedro Pachano, Malcolm Fick, Mark Hawthorne, Buck Donovan, Mark Smith, Daniel Bross, Laura Mensi, Lisa Blackmer, Sheila Irvin, Justine Dodds, Sari Hoy, Christine Rasmussen, Carol Hardy-Fanta, Sarah Gardner and Doug McNally.

V. Vote to Establish a Three Person BRPC Negotiating Subcommittee, consisting Solely of Executive Committee Members, to Negotiate Terms of Employment, Compensation and Benefits with the Incoming Executive Director

Doug McNally motioned to approve the establishment of a Three Person BRPC Negotiating Subcommittee, consisting Solely of Executive Committee Members, to Negotiate Terms of Employment, Compensation and Benefits with the Incoming Executive Director. Mark Smith seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion.

A roll call vote approved: Jay Meczywor, Al Blake, Pedro Pachano, Malcolm Fick, Mark Hawthorne, Buck Donovan, Mark Smith, Daniel Bross, Laura Mensi, Lisa Blackmer, Sheila Irvin, Justine Dodds, Sari Hoy, Christine Rasmussen, Carol Hardy-Fanta, Sarah Gardner and Doug McNally.

VI. Vote to Ratify the Commission Chair Malcolm Fick's, Appointments of Malcolm Fick, Buck Donovan, and Sam Haupt to the BRPC Negotiating Subcommittee

The BRPC Bylaws required the Commission to ratify the Commission Chair's appointments to committees.

Doug McNally motioned to approve the ratification of the Commission Chair Malcolm Fick's, Appointments of Malcolm Fick, Buck Donovan, and Sam Haupt to the BRPC Negotiating Subcommittee. Mark Smith seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion.

A roll call vote approved: Jay Meczywor, Al Blake, Pedro Pachano, Malcolm Fick, Mark Hawthorne, Buck Donovan, Mark Smith, Daniel Bross, Laura Mensi, Lisa Blackmer, Sheila Irvin, Justine Dodds, Sari Hoy, Christine Rasmussen, Carol Hardy-Fanta, Sarah Gardner and Doug McNally.

VII. Vote to Authorize the Commission Chair to Make a Formal Offer of Employment to the Incoming Executive Director, subject to Prior Approval by the BRPC Executive Committee and negotiation of a mutually acceptable employment agreement

Doug McNally motioned to authorize the approval of the Commission Chair to Make a Formal Offer of Employment to the Incoming Executive Director, subject to Prior Approval by the BRPC Executive Committee and negotiation of a mutually acceptable employment agreement. Sheila Irvin seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion.

A roll call vote approved: Jay Meczywor, Al Blake, Pedro Pachano, Malcolm Fick, Mark Hawthorne, Buck Donovan, Mark Smith, Daniel Bross, Laura Mensi, Lisa Blackmer, Sheila Irvin, Justine Dodds, Sari Hoy, Christine Rasmussen, Carol Hardy-Fanta, Sarah Gardner and Doug McNally.

VIII. Presentation & Discussion of Executive Committee Actions

Executive Committee actions taken on the Commission's behalf during the February 5, 2026, and March 5, 2026, meetings were presented for information and discussion. There were no comments on the executive committee actions.

IX. Vote to Amend the BRPC Bylaws

As described in an accompanying summary sheet, several clarifying items to the BRPC Bylaws needed approval.

Tom gave a brief summary of the bylaws. He clarified that some of the language was cleaned up and made gender neutral. The summary also included what would happen in the instance an elected member needs to be replaced in the middle of the fiscal year if they step down from their role. There was also clarification regarding committees and language around their appointments and expanding the role of the Commission Development Committee.

Doug McNally thanked Tom for cleaning up the meeting process and the bylaws before he retired.

Mark Smith motioned to amend the BRPC Bylaws. Sarah Gardner seconded the motion. There was no further discussion on the motion.

A roll call vote approved: Jay Meczywor, Al Blake, Pedro Pachano, Malcolm Fick, Mark Hawthorne, Buck Donovan, Mark Smith, Daniel Bross, Laura Mensi, Lisa Blackmer, Sheila Irvin, Justine Dodds, Sari Hoy, Christine Rasmussen, Carol Hardy-Fanta, Sarah Gardner and Doug McNally.

X. Open Discussion by Commission Members about Current Items of Interest in their City or Town

As time allowed, Delegates and Alternates were encouraged to discuss key items of interest in their City or Town, such as town meeting updates, development proposals, changes in municipal leadership, proposed development projects, etc.

Carol Hardy-Fanta from Tyringham is working on getting their 150 year old schoolhouse restored.

Mary McGurn from Egremont discussed their next town meeting in June regarding zoning bylaws on short term rentals.

Sari Hoy from Sheffield had also recently written their first short term rental bylaws and rewrote their ADU bylaws.

Buck Donovan mentioned that the Berkshire Edge had a mention of Lee's Select Board putting a recommendation for a moratorium on renewables and battery stations until they created a bylaw. Al Blake from Becket also had a moratorium passed at their recent town meeting on solar and bylaws.

Mark Smith and Dan Bross mentioned in Lenox they were working on a number of regulations, institutional bylaws, as well as upcoming sign bylaws.

XI. Report and Discussion of the Executive Director's Report

Tom mentioned the 5th Thursday event happening on April 30th with speaker Rick Collins from DOER. Any specific questions should be sent to either Tom or CJ Hoss. Tom encouraged members to send the invite around within their towns. The invite link was included in the meeting packet.

Tom also mentioned the Into Light exhibition in North Adams. The exhibition focuses on addiction and loss and is very moving.

XII. Adjournment

Doug McNally made a motion to adjourn. Buck Donovan seconded the motion.

A roll call approved the motion without discussion: Jay Meczywor, Al Blake, Pedro Pachano, Malcolm Fick, Mark Hawthorne, Buck Donovan, Mark Smith, Daniel Bross, Laura Mensi, Lisa Blackmer, Sheila Irvin, Justine Dodds, Sari Hoy, Christine Rasmussen, Carol Hardy-Fanta, Sarah Gardner and Doug McNally.

Several of the commission members gave their thanks to Tom for his work over the years at BRPC and in Berkshire County and his positive impact.

Tom thanked the commission for their support and success over the years. He hoped the commission would share this relationship with the incoming executive director.

The meeting adjourned at 7:48pm.