

APPROVED Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Executive Committee Minutes
Thursday, July 2, 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 4pm. He stated that BRPC was recording the meeting and said that if anyone else wanted to record it, they needed to inform him. Breanna Steele from 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
Mark Smith, Environmental Review Committee Chair, Lenox Delegate
Christine Rasmussen, Regional Issues Committee Chair, Stockbridge Alternate
Sam Haupt, Treasurer, Peru Delegate
Doug McNally, Commission Development Chair, Windsor Delegate
Mary McGurn, At-Large, Egremont Delegate

Not Present:

Sheila Irvin, Berkshire Brownfields Committee Chair, Pittsfield Delegate
Kyle Hanlon, At-Large, North Adams Delegate

Others Present:

Phillip Bass
John Fletcher, Otis Delegate
Stephen Lyle, Egremont Alternate
Breanna Steele, iBerkshires

Staff Present:

Laura Brennan, Executive Director
Marianne Snizek, Office Manager
Caitlin Davis, Office Administrator

III. Vote to Approve Minutes of the Executive Committee of June 4, 2026

Mary McGurn motioned to approve the June 4, 2026 meeting minutes. Buck Donovan seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion.

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

IV. Financial Reports and Discussion

a. Vote to Approve the May 29, 2026 – June 22, 2026, Expenditures Report

Doug McNally motioned to approve the **May 29, 2026 – June 22, 2026**, expenditures report. Mary McGurn seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion.

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

b. Report on the Accounts Receivable June 2026

Laura commented that we were recently paid by MBI, and although not a large amount, it was one of our longer waits. FRCOG would also be wiring \$18,655 funds to BRPC on Monday July 6th out of the \$40k they owe.

c. Report on the Line of Credit – June 2026

The line of credit remained at zero.

d. Discussion and Vote to Recommend regarding revised FY27 budget

Laura Brennan described proposed changes prior to the Full Commission on July 16th:

- *Benefits correction with health insurance cost over projected in the original budget*
- *Actual costs for Utilities in FY26 were higher than \$25k and would be expected to stay the same next FY, so this line was increased*
- *Legal increased to be level with the approved FY26 amount*
- *Staff Development proposed increase to \$25k to align with pending enhanced professional development program for staff*
- *Water and Recycling- in the midst of extensive file and record retention clean out of files stored in the basement, so this line was increased to accommodate additional recycling/shredding costs*
- *Website – increased to support compliance with ADA Title II digital accessibility regulations and potential structural changes to the website and documents contained on it*

Malcolm asked if the overhead would remain the same. Laura confirmed. Malcolm also asked if a recommendation to the full Commission would need to be made. While not required, it was agreed this was a good approach.

Doug McNally made a motion to recommend the Commission approve the

changes. Sam Haupt seconded the motion.

Mark Smith asked why water and recycling were on the same item line. Laura Brennan explained that vendor expenses were lumped together into the same account.

Christine Rasmussen asked if any documents of historical significance were being kept for the towns. Laura replied they were keeping an eye on those as they continued through the file clean out.

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

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

Mary McGurn brought up an issue that happened at a recent Egremont town meeting regarding short term rentals and zoning. The language used in an article for the zoning, which would legalize short term rentals and permit them throughout the town with some conditions. The phrase used was 'Zoning by-law was contingent on passing the general by-law,' which would have meant the town votes would not have meant anything if there were a failure to pass. Mary was curious if this had happened at any other town meetings which the committee had not experienced. Doug McNally asked how that language was included in there, which the town's counsel had allowed.

VI. Update re: Governor's PILOT Commission from appointee Sam Haupt

Sam Haupt gave brief update of the [Governor's PILOT Commission](#). There would be two listening sessions in Western Massachusetts, one held at FRCOG in Greenfield and one at the Berkshire Innovation Center in Pittsfield. They were looking for people involved in municipal finance, such as town budgets, to participate. The link to [join the PILOT session](#) was shared with the executive committee through the meeting chat.

The second PILOT Commission meeting was held on June 16th. Sam's summary included:

- Many rural and western MA communities and municipalities receive per-acre reimbursements below the state median.
- Public utility of water-watershed communities have their own rates.
- Local resistance to land conservation and the need for more state support.
- Next meeting to be held in the fall after listening sessions.

Christine Rasmussen asked how Berkshire County and BRPC could help in being better heard. Sam would like BRPC to become engaged in a more active role and provide advocacy tools. He was also going to connect with the Woodlands Partnership.

VII. Items Requiring Action

a. Vote to approve disposal of surplus inventory from BRPC offices

A list of items to be disposed of which either do not work or are in poor condition and should not be offered in the usual manner to municipalities before disposal, was included in the meeting packet.

Doug McNally made a motion to approve the disposal of surplus inventory from BRPC offices. Mark Smith seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion.

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

b. Vote to approve updated FY27 Pay Ranges

The meeting packet included an updated FY27 Pay Ranges document, adjusted to include salary rather than hourly ranges for several positions within BRPC's Administrative team. Recent research has confirmed that these positions qualify under the Administrative Exemption (5 CFR 551.206) of the Fair Labor Standards Act. BRPC staff utilized the most recent FLSA Worksheet, published in 2024, as well as Fact Sheet #17C, to determine eligibility.

Mary McGurn motioned to approve the updated FY27 Pay Ranges. Doug McNally seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion.

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

c. Vote to Approve Comments re: OMB Proposed Rule affecting 2 CFR

The Executive Committee was requested to review, discuss and approve draft comments prepared by BRPC staff in response to the proposed rule changing current OMB Guidance for Federal Financial Assistance, affecting how federal grants and other forms of assistance are awarded, administered, documented, and passed through to subrecipients. Posted on the Federal Register on May 29, 2026, these changes have a proposed effective date of October 1, 2026. Comments are due July 13, 2026. For reference, summaries are shared below:

- [National Association of Development Organizations \(NADO\) blog post](#)
- [Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations \(AMPO\) summary](#)
- [National Association of Counties \(NACo\) recording and resources](#)

Laura shared a [draft letter](#) with the executive committee. The letter targeted aspects of these changes that would be most impactful to BRPC. There have been over 47k comments submitted. Laura asked the committee what the appropriate way would be for a final draft of comments. Malcolm Fick suggested assembling comments the following week and a discussion on steps to take after.

Doug McNally motioned to approve the draft comments prepared by BRPC staff in response to the proposed rule changing current OMB Guidance for Federal Financial Assistance. Sam Haupt seconded the motion.

Mary McGurn mentioned she had submitted comments to Laura and congratulated her on being diplomatic.

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

VIII. Committee Updates, Reports and Discussion

a. Commission Development Committee

The Commission Development Committee meets as needed and did not meet in June 2026.

b. Environmental Review Committee

The Environmental Review Committee meets as needed and did not need to meet in June 2026. Mark Smith was dealing with a comment deadline for a dam repair in collaboration with Melissa Provencher.

c. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee meets as needed and did not meet in June 2026.

d. Regional Issues Committee

The Regional Issues Committee did not meet in June 2026.

Christine Rasmussen provided an overview of the legislative report included in the meeting packet.

e. Berkshire Brownfields Committee

The Brownfields Committee meet as needed and did not meet in June 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 met on June 23rd. Draft minutes are not yet available. Buck Donovan sat in for Malcolm Fick and provided a quick update on action items such as changing funding numbers on a few TIP projects, such as Ashland Street in North Adams and the Route 8 Ledge project in Becket.

g. Comprehensive Economic Development (CEDS) Committee

The CEDS Committee typically meets four times per year and did not meet in June 2026.

h. Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

The Transportation Advisory Committee meets as needed primarily to advise on the TIP development process. The TAC did not meet in June 2026.

IX. Executive Director's Report and Discussion

a. Report on New Contracts/Agreements

New Grants and Contracts received/initiated from 5/29/26 – 6/22/26

- Peru - Paving Procurement - \$2,705
- AARP - Home Fit Modifications - \$2,500
- Sheffield - Master Plan and Open Space and Recreation Plan - \$105,000

- Berkshire Public Health Alliance - Regional Public Health Nursing Program:
 - Clarksburg - \$3,193.30
 - North Adams - \$10,529.13
 - Williamstown - \$7,120.80

Grants and Contracts not received

We are not aware of not receiving any grants or contracts.

b. Berkshires Tomorrow Inc. (BTI) Update

The BTI Board approved the following:

- There was no new activity in June for BTI.

Grants and Contracts not received

- Requests to the Brooks and Joan Fortune Family Foundation, Mountain One, Lee Bank and Adams Community Bank, all \$5,000 or less, to support the Berkshire Funding Focus initiative.
- The Centene Foundation for the formation of a Berkshire Hoarding Task Force. BTI had applied for \$25,000.
- The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity for the FY 2026 Environmental Justice Capacity Building Grant for \$46,556.88.

c. Staff Updates

- Summer Interns and New Hires:
 - Community Planning interns - Joel Jorgensen and Lillian Boudreau
 - Associate Planner, Environmental & Energy – Anika Supta
- FY27 Promotions (effective July 1st)
 - Krystal Bartley – HR & Payroll Assistant to Human Resources Administrator
 - Britney Danials – Planner to Senior Planner
 - Noé González-Ortiz – Planner to Senior Planner
 - Alecia Herrick – Finance Assistant to Finance Administrator
 - Jocelyn Latvalla – Associate Planner to Planner
 - Andy McKeever – Planner to Senior Planner

Laura described the recent process of approving annual reviews of 42 staff, stating that it was an impressive and encouraging experience as a first time executive director.

d. Seasonal Communities Advisory Council Update

The Seasonal Communities Advisory Council met on June 17, 2026. More information is at [Seasonal Communities | Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/seasonal-communities-advisory-council). CJ Hoss is now attending these meetings on behalf of BRPC.

e. Rural Policy Advisory Commission

The Rural Policy Advisory Commission meets every two months and did not meet in June. Public engagement sessions regarding the nine chapters of the 2026 Rural Policy Plan continued throughout the month of June.

Laura gave a thank you to all that attended the meetings. Doug McNally commented that he was surprised by the low attendance in the sessions that he

attended, which others agreed. Overall, the sentiment was that the content of the sessions was strong, and that the recommendations of the Plan are well supported.

f. Massachusetts Integrated Land Use Strategy (MILUS)

The state's consultant for the MILUS initiative, HR&A Advisors, has selected five pilot locations to test and review the impacts of MILUS. These include Charlemont and vicinity, within the neighboring FRCOG region, to test largely rural areas with highway access and freight rail but little to no public water or centralized sewer, and much of it with low median income. MILUS workgroups/teams will use this and other areas to test and help refine MILUS methods. Testing MILUS at a small regional scale will help assess how effectively MILUS is accounting for current conditions, yielding results that make sense on the ground, and promoting equity and other shared goals.

Malcolm Fick asked what it was MILUS was testing. Laura explained that it was identifying metrics they would use to look at a region's criteria for something specific, for example economic development, looking at proximity to sewer and water. The consultants are looking for unintended consequences of their metrics.

g. Passenger Rail More information can be found at [Compass Rail | Mass.gov.](#)

- [West-East Rail](#) – BRPC was not aware of any updates this month.
- [Berkshire Flyer](#) – BRPC did not have any updates this month.
- [Northern Tier Passenger Rail](#) – The economic benefits study continues, with the most recent meeting having been on Monday, June 29th.

A recent component of the work, a Conveyal Analysis, looked at how access to additional jobs would be made viable by the new stations. This number would be smaller in North Adams where our attention would be focused, than in other areas impacted by Northern Tier Rail, due to their proximity to Worcester and the Boston area.

h. Technical Assistance Report

The technical assistance report for May is included in the packet, indicating assistance provided to the Town of Lee and the City of North Adams.

i. Employee Recognition Program

Originally established in 2013, the BRPC Employee Recognition Program has been revised to include recognition at 5-year anniversaries, and to explicitly encompass recognition of 25-year anniversaries (and every 5 years thereafter). A full description of the expanded and enhanced program is included in the meeting packet.

X. Old Business and Discussion

a. Topics for the July 16, 2026 Commission Meeting

Anticipated topics for the July 2026 Commission Meeting include:

- Guest: Senator Paul Mark – overview of priorities, key issues
- Election of Officers
- Approval of At Large Members of Executive Committee

- Approval of Chairs – BRPC Standing and Special Committees
- Overview of the FY27 Commissioners' Handbook
- Report and Discussion – Executive Director's Memo
- Discussion of Items of Interest

Laura indicated that Senator Mark is confirmed for the July meeting.

XI. New Business and Discussion

a. At-Large members on FY27 Executive Committee

Both Mary McGurn and Kyle Hanlon have confirmed their interest in serving as At-Large members of the Executive Committee in FY27. Should these appointments be made by the Commission Chair, and ratified by the full Commission, the Executive Committee will be populated at the requisite nine members.

These recommendations would be put forward to the full commission. The new appointments would be made by the new chair.

b. Initial List of Standing and Special Committees, External Appointments for FY27

Included in the meeting packet is a DRAFT list of Standing and Special Committee membership for FY27, as well as proposed appointments to external boards, committees, and commissions. Committee membership may grow with the arrival of new Delegates and Alternates, and additional members are welcome especially at the beginning of a new fiscal year.

These lists would be appointed by the chair. With several new alternates and delegates joining we would want to make them feel welcome and encourage them to join one of these committees. A list of committees that could accept new members would also be provided.

XI. Adjournment

Doug McNally made a motion to adjourn. Sam Haupt seconded the motion.

The motion passed with affirmative votes with no discussion from: Malcolm Fick, Buck Donovan, Mark Smith, Christine Rasmussen, Sam Haupt, Mary McGurn and Doug McNally.

The meeting adjourned at 5:25pm.