

APPROVED Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Executive Committee Minutes
Thursday, August 6, 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 Buck Donovan called the meeting to order at 4:06pm. 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 also recorded the meeting.

II. Roll Call

Caitlin Davis, Office Administrator, read the roll call.

Members Present:

Buck Donovan, Chair, Lee Delegate
Malcolm Fick, Vice Chair, Great Barrington Alternate
Sheila Irvin, Berkshire Brownfields Committee Chair, Pittsfield Delegate
Mark Smith, Environmental Review Committee Chair, Lenox Delegate
Kyle Hanlon, At-Large, North Adams Delegate
Sam Haupt, Treasurer, Peru Delegate
Doug McNally, Commission Development Chair, Windsor Delegate
Mary McGurn, At-Large, Egremont Delegate

Not Present:

Christine Rasmussen, Regional Issues Committee Chair, Stockbridge Alternate

Others Present:

James Garzon
Naomi Simpson
Breanna Steele, iBerkshires

Staff Present:

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

III. Vote to Approve the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of July 2, 2026 Minutes

Doug McNally moved to approve the July 2, 2026 meeting minutes. Malcolm Fick seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion.

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

IV. Financial Reports and Discussion

a. Vote to Approve the June 23, 2026 – July 29, 2026, Expenditures Report

Doug McNally moved to approve the **June 23, 2026 – July 29, 2026**, expenditures report. Kyle Hanlon seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion.

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

b. Report on the Accounts Receivable July 2026

The Accounts Receivable was in good standing, even with the over 90 day payments due. Some of the payments listed on the report were already in process and scheduled. A few over \$100k due were receivables have gone through since the meeting materials were sent out.

c. Report on the Line of Credit – July 2026

The line of credit remained at zero.

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 commented on the [Build in the Berkshires](#) mapping site that was recently created by BRPC. She was impressed with the site and would like to share with Egremont's Planning Board. Laura commented that this was a soft launch, feedback was welcome, and that it was funded by a FY26 grant from the MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs.

Buck Donovan mentioned Lee's ribbon cutting ceremony for the housing development at Eagle Mill, which had been ongoing since 2012. This is an example of the types of properties displayed on the new website, encouraging investment.

VI. Update re: Governor's PILOT Commission-Listening Sessions Update

Sam Haupt gave a brief recap of the July 24th listening session. It was well

attended with 100 attendees, including Senator Paul Mark. There were breakout sessions which were mainly positive. There will be additional sessions conducted sometime in the fall, once the information and useable data is formatted to formulate potential modifications to the program. The next sessions would focus on eligible vs. ineligible lands for reimbursement, as well as the ecological value and impacts of things such as tourism. Sam would share that information with the executive committee once it was available. Doug McNally thanked Sam for his Berkshires representation.

VII. Items Requiring Action

a. Vote to ratify the signing of a contract with Berkshire Community College for the Northern Berkshire Education Sustainability Study

The Executive Committee was requested to ratify signing by the Executive Director of agreement with Berkshire Community College, which is the fiduciary for Berkshire Education Resources K-12 (BERK12), for the Northern Berkshire Education Sustainability Study. BRPC will provide data and analysis assistance to the steering committee. The \$15,000 contract runs through June 30, 2027. There is no match required. The staff lead on this project will be Mark Maloy, mmaloy@berkshireplanning.org, x29.

Doug McNally moved to approve the ratification of the signing of a contract with Berkshire Community College for the Northern Berkshire Education Sustainability Study. Malcolm Fick seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion.

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

b. Vote to approve a proposed BRPC Security and Privacy Policy

The meeting packet included a draft of a Security and Privacy Policy. This content was removed from the Use of the Internet and Communications Policy and was proposed as a stand-alone policy (see below), as it addresses items outside of those topics.

Malcolm Fick moved to approve a proposed BRPC Security and Privacy Policy. Mary McGurn seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion.

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

c. Vote to approve a revised BRPC Use of the Internet and Communications Systems Policy

The meeting packet included a draft of the Use of the Internet and Communications Systems Policy. This version no longer contained content now

proposed to be a stand-alone Security and Privacy Policy (see above).

Doug McNally moved to approve a revised BRPC Use of the Internet and Communications Systems Policy. Mark Smith seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion.

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

d. Vote to approve a revised BRPC Compensatory Time Policy

The meeting packet included a draft of the Compensatory Time Policy. The substantive proposed change allows staff to use their earned comp time from the previous fiscal year as late as September 30th of the current fiscal year. The previous deadline had been July 15th.

Doug McNally moved to approve a revised BRPC Compensatory Time Policy. Mark Smith seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion.

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

e. Vote to approve a further 1-year extension to BRPC's Telework Policy

The meeting packet included a draft of the Telework Policy for BRPC employees. The Executive Committee was requested to approve a further 1-year extension, beginning as of July 1, 2026. This policy, which was originally adopted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, requires onsite employees to work in the office at least two days per week. Employees may work remotely the other days.

Doug McNally moved to approve a further 1-year extension to BRPC's Telework Policy. Malcolm Fick seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion.

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

f. Vote to approve a revised Professional Development Program for BRPC Employees

The meeting packet included a draft of a proposed revised Professional Development Program for BRPC Employees. This revision combines three distinct professional development offerings from the past into a multi-part system, and increases the maximum dollar amounts available in Part 1 from \$500/year to \$750/year, and in Part 2 from \$1,500/year to \$2,000/year. It also reduces the minimum years of full-time employment to access Part 2 from 5 years to 3 years. The Executive Committee was requested to authorize this revised policy, effective retroactively to July 1, 2026.

Buck Donovan asked if the 3 years should be bumped to 2 years. Laura described internal conversations with managers about this, who thought the 3 years was a good compromise but could be revisited down the road.

Malcolm Fick moved to approve revised Professional Development Program for BRPC Employees starting July 2026. Doug McNally seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion.

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

g. Vote to authorize the Executive Director to enter into Intergovernmental Agreements and Contracts with Municipalities for FY27

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the Executive Director to enter into intergovernmental agreements and contracts for services with municipalities in FY27, effective as of July 1, 2026, thereby ratifying contracts already signed since that date.

Malcolm Fick moved to approve the Executive Director to enter into Intergovernmental Agreements and Contracts with Municipalities for FY27. Sam Haupt seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion.

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

VIII. Committee Updates, Reports and Discussion

a. Commission Development Committee

Commission Development meets as needed and did not meet in July 2026.

b. Environmental Review Committee

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

c. Finance Committee

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

d. Regional Issues Committee

The Regional Issues Committee meets as needed and did not meet in July. A Legislative Update provided by RIC Chair Christine Rasmussen was included in the meeting packet.

Laura provided a brief update on Christine's packet, which included housing issues at the State and Federal levels. One of the areas that we could provide more information on is the changes to 40A, that were outside sections of the economic bill. Doug McNally mentioned small multi-family homes and zoning regulations and the permitting process, with regard to limitations with building in

small towns. Mary McGurn also mentioned that Egremont had some zoning bylaws that would create multi-unit developments.

e. Berkshire Brownfield Committee

The Berkshire Brownfield Committee meet as needed and did not meet in July.

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 meet in July. The next meeting is scheduled for August 25th.

g. Comprehensive Economic Development (CEDS) Committee

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

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 July 2026.

IX. Executive Director's Report and Discussion

a. Staff Updates

- Public Health Inspector James Massey has provided notice of his resignation, effective August 20th.
- Ned Saviski has been hired as a part-time Public Health Inspector. He will start with BRPC during the week of August 17th. Ned's resume is included in the meeting packet.

b. Report on New Contracts/Agreements

New Grants and Contracts received/initiated from 6/23/26 – 7/28/26

- Berkshire County Boards of Health Association - Administration - \$14,500
- Great Barrington - Shared Economic Development Planner - \$12,500
- Lanesborough - Stormwater Management Support - \$16,650
- Adams - Shared Economic Development Planner - \$10,000
- FRCOG - Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordination - \$68,160
- FRCOG - Berkshire County Medical Reserve Corps - \$22,056
- Department of Energy Resources - Regional Energy Plan Assistance - Additional \$96,000
- Health Resources in Action County Health Initiative - Community Health Improvement Planning - \$375,000
- DPH - Public Health Excellence for Shared Services - \$515,700.10
- DPH - Training Hub - Cooperative Agreement for Emergency Response: Public Health Response - \$549,700
- Cheshire - Stormwater Management Support - \$6,650
- BTI - Berkshire Funding Focus - \$53,902.90
- Great Barrington - Digital Equity Implementation - Additional \$4,562
- Lee - Digital Equity Implementation - Additional \$3,000
- West Stockbridge - Digital Equity Implementation - Additional \$3,050
- Otis - Master Plan - \$70,000
- Sheffield - Master Plan and Open Space Rec Plan - \$105,000
- Massachusetts Office of Behavioral Health Promotion and Prevention - CEMS Age Friendly Berkshires - \$300,000
- BTI - Point32Health Foundation - Age Friendly Berkshires - \$220,500

- Williamstown Housing Authority - Massachusetts Broadband Institute's - Retrofit Ancillary Grantee Program - \$9,014
- Stockbridge - Massachusetts Broadband Institute's - Retrofit Ancillary Grantee Program - \$9,000
- Health Resources in Action - Community Health Equity Initiative - \$2,000
- Lenox - Open Space and Recreation Plan & ADA - \$80,000
- BARR Foundation - RAY Fellowship - \$194,000
- Lanesborough - Shared Economic Planning - \$10,000
- Adams - Short-Term Rental Bylaw - \$5,000
- BCC - Northern Berkshire Education School Study - \$15,000

Grants and Contracts not received

- Massachusetts Community Health and Healthy Aging Funds - \$457,000
This would have been a 5-year project and was an ambitious attempt to secure funds that would have helped us dive back into the age-friendly work that our public health team had been doing for several years. We did receive a separate grant from the same program.
- EPA Brownfields Regional Assessment - \$500,000
This was a 3-year ask, with a pending opportunity to resubmit after a debrief on this application. This was part of Region 1, which did poorly overall in this round of applications.
- MassCEC EmPower Capacity Building for air quality - \$150,000

c. Berkshires Tomorrow Inc. (BTI) Update

The BTI Board approved the following:

- BTI to hire BRPC for Professional Services for Berkshires Funding Focus - \$53,902.90

Grants and Contracts not received

We are not aware of any at this time.

d. Seasonal Communities Advisory Council Update

The Seasonal Communities Advisory Council did not meet in July 2026. The next meeting is scheduled for fall of 2026. More info [Seasonal Communities | Mass.gov](#).

e. Rural Policy Advisory Commission

The Rural Policy Advisory Commission meets every two months. The last meeting was held in person on July 17th. Members of RPAC are currently reviewing final drafts of chapters for the 2026 Rural Policy Plan and making arrangements to present Plan content to the Administration and to legislators. There is a potential visit to the State House in September.

f. Massachusetts Integrated Land Use Strategy (MILUS)

Regional planning agencies have recently received a proposed schedule for ongoing MILUS work in the fall of 2026. This will include individual meetings between the state's project team (managed by EEA) and each RPA. BRPC's meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 2nd. Staff will provide feedback on the suitability standards for each MILUS category.

In late October, the state's project team will conduct virtual meetings with

municipal staff from each RPA. BRPC's region will be grouped with FRCOG and PVPC's regions for this meeting and Save the Date emails have been sent to municipal managers, town planners, and community development directors for an anticipated meeting on Thursday, October 22nd from 10 am to noon. These invites will also be shared with Planning Board chairs and/or BRPC Delegates soon.

g. Passenger Rail

- West-East Rail – We are not aware of any updates this month.
- Berkshire Flyer – We do not have any updates this month.
- Northern Tier Passenger Rail – The economic benefits study continues. The most recent meeting was held on July 27th. Attendees discussed feedback heard during consultant interviews with local stakeholders, approaches to estimating potential tourist spending impacts, and approaches to the population and housing models being considered by the consultant.

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

h. Transportation Access Survey

The meeting packet includes a flyer promoting a recently launched survey to better understand Berkshire County residents' transportation needs and how to address them. Williams College and Luminary Evaluation are conducting this survey as part of the "Transportation Security Index" (TSI) model, at the request of BRPC. While originally proposed as part of the A2A Trail design and engineering effort, this survey and the TSI will provide wide-ranging value for future transportation efforts countywide. The survey is available as an [English language version](#) and a [Spanish language version](#). The [project website](#) offers additional information.

i. Berkshire Grit Alliance

BRPC staff have been participating in group discussions over the course of 2026, in partnership with Berkshire United Way, Nonprofit Center of the Berkshires (NPC), and others, exploring ways to more closely connect members of the nonprofit sector and government agencies, along with interested for-profit entities, with the purpose of improving overall resilience in the region. NPC recently added [a page to their website to summarize this effort](#) and invite participation through an online form. Background on the Berkshire Grit Alliance is also available through [an article from February in the Berkshire Eagle](#).

The Linde Center at Tanglewood will host a day long symposium with Berkshire Grit Alliance in May of 2027, with a [Save the Date available now](#).

j. Disaster Relief and Resiliency Fund (DRRF)

The Disaster Relief and Resiliency Fund (DRRF) was established to help Massachusetts respond more quickly and effectively to major disasters when federal assistance is unavailable or insufficient.

The Healey-Driscoll Administration published [emergency regulations](#) in the

Central Register on July 29. These regulations will take effect immediately for 90 days while the state completes the standard notice-and-comment rulemaking process to establish permanent regulations.

Initially, the program will focus on municipal assistance to help restore critical infrastructure following major disasters. Eligibility for DRRF assistance will be determined by the Administration, with potential funding amounts informed by MEMA's existing Initial Damage Assessment process, which communities already use to support federal disaster assistance evaluation.

The framework also encourages municipalities to maintain current local preparedness and hazard mitigation plans and aligns recovery investments with broader resiliency standards.

The Administration welcomes municipal feedback on the emergency regulations to help inform revisions to the permanent regulations. A public listening session is anticipated in approximately one month. To receive registration information, please email anf.regs@mass.gov.

Information on eligibility, implementation, and disaster recovery resources is available on the DRRF website: mass.gov/info-details/disaster-relief-and-resiliency-fund.

k. Technical Assistance Report

The technical assistance report for June is included in the packet, indicating assistance provided to the Town of Lee.

X. Old Business and Discussion

a. MARPA and DLS Statewide Municipal Partnerships Conference on October 5

Registration is open for the 2026 Statewide Municipal Partnerships Conference, designed for municipal officials and staff, and co-hosted by MARPA, DLS, and MAPC at the College of the Holy Cross, Hogan Campus Center, in Worcester, MA. Registration fee is \$20. [Registration is now available online through MAPC.](#)

b. Kusik Awards – Nominations open until August 27

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission gives the Kusik Award annually to projects, groups, or individuals who have made outstanding contributions to planning in Berkshire County. This annual award honors the late Charles Kusik, a resident of the Town of Richmond. For over three decades, Charles Kusik placed his expert imprint on the zoning bylaws of nearly every town in the Berkshires. Award winners are selected by the Executive Director and honored at the BRPC annual meeting each fall. Nominations are open for the 2026 Kusik Award, due no later than August 27, 2026. [Please use this online form to nominate an individual or organization.](#) You can also learn more about the history of the Kusik Award, and view a list of past recipients, at berkshireplanning.org/about/kusik-award/

XI. New Business and Discussion

a. Potential Topics for the September 17, 2026 Commission Meeting

The following items were considered for inclusion on the September agenda:

Berkshire County Plan(ning) Search Tool

BRPC has been working with students from UMass Amherst to develop an AI model that accesses the most recent municipal plans (Comprehensive Plans, Open Space & Recreation Plans, Municipal Vulnerability Plans, etc., from all Berkshire communities) and allows staff, municipalities, and partner agencies to ask questions, such as, "which communities are interested in ADU's", or "what are the highest priority actions across municipalities in the Northern Berkshire region". Courteny Morehouse is available to give a demonstration of the model and discuss how it can be used for municipal planning efforts.

- Community Planning and/or Community Development & Housing staff presentation
- Executive Director's Memo - Report and Discussion
- Discussion of Items of Interest

Mary McGurn was also asked to present about cottage cluster zoning in Egremont.

b. Annual Meeting in October

Staff have confirmed availability and ADA accessibility at the Country Club of Pittsfield for Thursday, October 15th. A Save the Date message will be issued soon. We are eager for suggestions regarding guest speaker(s).

The Executive Committee was comfortable with the October 15th date. Tickets will be available soon to purchase.

XI. Adjournment

Malcolm Fick made a motion to adjourn. Doug McNally seconded the motion.

The motion passed with affirmative votes with no discussion from: Buck Donovan, Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, Mark Smith, Sam Haupt, Mary McGurn and Doug McNally. Kyle Hanlon left the meeting early and did not vote.

The meeting adjourned at 5:12pm.