*BUCK DONOVAN, Chair*
*MALCOLM FICK, Vice-Chair*
*SHEILA IRVIN, Clerk*
*SAM HAUPT, Treasurer*
*LAURA BRENNAN, Executive Director*

# **APPROVED** Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Executive Committee Minutes

**Thursday, October 1, 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 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.com 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
Christine Rasmussen, Regional Issues Committee Chair, Stockbridge Alternate
Kyle Hanlon, At-Large, North Adams Delegate
Sam Haupt, Treasurer, Peru Delegate- left meeting at 4:30pm
Doug McNally, Commission Development Chair, Windsor Delegate
Mary McGurn, At-Large, Egremont Delegate

Not Present:
Mark Smith, Environmental Review Committee Chair, Lenox Alternate

Others Present:
Eric Anderson, Town Manager, Dalton
Breanna Steele, iBerkshires.com
Patrick White, Stockbridge

Staff Present:
Laura Brennan, Executive Director
Marianne Sniezek, Office Manager
Caitlin Davis, Office Administrator
Melissa Provencher, Environmental and Energy Manager

## III. Vote to Approve the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of September 3, 2026 Minutes

Doug McNally moved to approve the September 3, 2026 meeting minutes. Christine Rasmussen seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion.

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

## IV. Financial Reports and Discussion

### a. Vote to Approve the August 27, 2026 – September 23, 2026, Expenditures Report

Doug McNally moved to approve the **August 27, 2026 – September 23,2026**, expenditures report. 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, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, Sam Haupt, Mary McGurn and Doug McNally.

### b. Report on the Accounts Receivable September 2026

Laura expressed that she was confident in the over-90 bills being paid and that BRPC was currently well positioned to cover those funds. Several outstanding invoices are related to municipal assessments for FY27.

One overdue bill in particular was the TARPA (technical assistance for RPA's) for $71k. The reason this invoice had not yet been paid was due to the funds not being fully spent. Payment was anticipated in late October.

Melissa Provencher was also going to work with her staff to connect with MassCEC regarding resolution to two large overdue invoices.

### c. Report on the Line of Credit – September 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.

Doug McNally, as the representative of the Westfield River Wild and Scenic committee, mentioned they might approach BRPC or BTI as their financial/fiscal agent in the future. He wanted to make the executive committee aware of this potential update.

Mary McGurn recently attended ADU financing 101 at Greylock Federal Credit Union. Sari Hoy, delegate from Sheffield and BRPC Staff Wylie Goodman, were also in attendance. Greylock provided 3 options to facilitate ADUs. The examples were an option with Mass Housing, home equity and bundling a current mortgage.

## VI. Items Requiring Action

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

The meeting packet included a memo from BRPC's GIS, Data and IT Manager, Mark Maloy, listing items to be disposed of or offered to towns before disposal.

Malcolm Fick moved to approve disposal of surplus inventory from BRPC offices. 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, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, Sam Haupt, Mary McGurn and Doug McNally.

**b. Vote to approve revised New Hire Relocation Reimbursement Policy**

The meeting packet included the proposed revised policy, which is more thorough in terms of what is and is not eligible for reimbursement, and links to the IRS mileage webpage rather than needing annual or semi-annual adjustments.

Doug McNally moved to approve the revised New Hire Relocation Reimbursement Policy. Christine Rasmussen seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion.

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

**c. Vote to approve submission of a grant application to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) FY26 Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use, Site-Based Program (COSSUP)**

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) FY26 Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use, Site-Based Program (COSSUP) and sign any resulting contracts and agreements. This three-year grant opportunity offers up to $1,300,000 to increase field engagement infrastructure to those at risk of overdose and other substance-related harms, expand community capacity to prevent overdose and related behavioral health incidences, and increase coordination among the local justice system, medical providers, and behavioral health agencies. There is no match required. There would be subcontractors/subrecipients. BRPC contact is Andy Ottoson, aottoson@berkshireplanning.org.

Doug McNally moved to approve the submission of a grant application to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) FY26 Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use, Site-Based Program (COSSUP). Mary McGurn seconded the motion.

Malcolm Fick asked what the likelihood of receiving this would be. Laura replied that we had a good track record in the past of these funds and would keep an eye on the terms and conditions related to this.

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

**d. Vote to ratify the submission of a grant application to the Massachusetts Office of Outdoor Recreation's Mass Outdoors Phase 2 Grant Program**

The Executive Committee was requested to authorize the Executive Director to submit a grant application to the Massachusetts Office of Outdoor Recreation's Mass Outdoors Phase 2 grant program and sign any resulting contracts and agreements. This grant will provide funding for BRPC to update records on the Berkshires Outside website and to provide the updates to the Mass Outdoors statewide database. This grant would also provide BRPC with funding to assist other RPAs across the Commonwealth in developing their own inventories of outdoor recreation assets. BRPC has applied for $7,000. There is no match required. BRPC contact is Mark Maloy, mmaloy@berkshireplanning.org.

Doug McNally moved to approve the ratification submission of a grant application to the Massachusetts Office of Outdoor Recreation's Mass Outdoors Phase 2 Grant Program. 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, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, Sam Haupt, Mary McGurn and Doug McNally.

**e. Vote to approve draft comments to the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs re: City of Pittsfield Sandwash Reservoir Dam Repairs SEIR, EEA #17065**

The Executive Committee was requested to approve comments to the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs re: City of Pittsfield Sandwash Reservoir Dam Repairs SEIR, EEA #17065.

Doug McNally moved to approve draft comments. Sheila Irvin seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion.

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

**f. Vote to approve draft comments re: Proposed Rule issued by the U.S. Census Bureau, "Decennial Census of the Population of Americans; Proposed Residence Criteria and Proposed Regulations for Demographic Questions."**

Christine Rasmussen moved to approve modified draft comments re: Proposed Rule issued by the U.S. Census Bureau, to include additional comments in the Berkshires and Western MA, from the executive director . Mary McGurn seconded the motion.

Laura provided background information on the draft comments. The stance in the letter wouldn't change but she wanted the group's permission to strengthen the comments by the October 13th deadline. Laura was asked to provide testimony on the census and as the first time being invited to do this, wanted to make the executive committee aware. In the past, Tom would mention it in his report and provide details and feedback after his attendance.

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

**VII. Discussion of Parcenomics, consideration of inclusion on a future Commission agenda**

During open comments by Delegates and Alternates at a previous Executive Committee, Mary McGurn brought to the attention of Executive Committee members the availability of Parcenomics.com, developed by Patrick White, described as primarily a municipal fiscal analysis tool that uses a town's parcel and municipal data to examine assessment fairness, tax compliance, available local option revenues, demographic patterns, and new growth.

Patrick gave a brief presentation on Parcenomics, Great Barrington and Stockbridge used as examples. The highlights included:

- Four main areas: Growth Base; Recover what is owed; Shift who pays; The anchor
- Assumptions Tab-reviews financials
- Maps and directions of each town from 1800-present as a searchable webpage; also used for searching ancestry
- Suggested a 30-day free trial run

Malcolm Fick asked what the next steps were, which Patrick suggested reviewing with Mark Maloy once Mark looked at the meeting recording. It would be helpful to review with other BRPC staff as well.

Laura thought it had the potential to be valuable and asked about gathering data and sources for each community, asking if this be a closed system and not run the risk of these data points changing or being compromised. Patrick explained that there was no data in Parcenomics that was not available to anybody who conducted a public records request. Any requests through Parcenomics would be a closed loop system that would not be public facing.

## VIII. Committee Updates, Reports and Discussion

**a. Commission Development Committee**
The Commission Development Committee meets as needed and did not meet in September 2026.

**b. Environmental Review Committee**
The Environmental Review Committee meets as needed and met on September 28th.

**c. Finance Committee**
The Finance Committee meets as needed and did not meet in September 2026. The next Finance Committee meeting was scheduled for November 10th.

**d. Regional Issues Committee**
The Regional Issues Committee meets as needed and did not meet in September 2026.
Christine Rasmussen provided some highlights from her legislative report:

- With legislature out of session, major bills were expected to move forward, but not until after the election season
- As of October 1st, municipalities had to start offering consolidated local permitting process for small energy
- Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities released a redline version of the 48 changes in the FY27 budget and guidance on local actions of these changes
- Mary McGurn mentioned the tool for citing guidance in the packet and found it interesting and encouraging to use

**e. Berkshire Brownfield Committee**
The Berkshire Brownfield Committee meet as needed and did not meet in September 2026. The next Brownfields meeting will be about 6 weeks out.

**f. Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Committee (MPO)**
The MPO typically meets virtually on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 4:00 pm. The MPO's most recent meeting was on September 22nd. Draft minutes are not yet available. A current list of MPO Signatories is included in the meeting packet. The next MPO meeting would be October 20th.

**g. Comprehensive Economic Development (CEDS) Committee**
The CEDS Committee typically meets four times per year and did not meet in September 2026. The next meeting is scheduled for October 14, 2026, at 1:00pm. The process of submitting the next 5 years for CEDs were underway. Laura asked the executive committee if anyone wanted to join and they could listen in to the next meeting.

**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 September 2026.

## IX. Executive Director's Report and Discussion

**a. Update re: OMB Proposed Rule**

The House passed a Continuing Resolution on September 2nd, effective through December 11th, which included language temporarily prohibiting the implementation of these changes:

> Sec. 157.
>
> (a) *Notwithstanding section 106, through December 11, 2026, a rule to revise the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (commonly known as the "Uniform Guidance"), arising out of the notice of proposed rulemaking titled "Regulation for Federal Financial Assistance", which was published in the Federal Register on May 29, 2026, or a substantially similar rule, shall not be issued or finalized.*
>
> *(b) Notwithstanding section 106, if a rule described in subsection (a) is issued or finalized prior to the enactment of this Act, such rule shall not have force or take effect through December 11, 2026.*

Excerpt from a 9/24/2026 e-newsletter from the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO):

*President Trump is discussing implementing proposed sweeping changes to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB)'s federal award guidance through an Executive Order, much to the frustration of Senate Appropriations Chair Susan Collins (R-ME). Last month, Congress passed a short-term funding bill that temporarily blocked OMB from finalizing this proposed rule through December 11.*

**b. Staff Updates**

- Sarah Dias has joined BRPC as a Public Health Inspector (off-site). Sarah's resume is included in the meeting packet.
- A Public Health Planner position with an Emergency Preparedness focus has been posted.

Open positions are posted on BRPC's employment page and other locations.

**c. Report on New Contracts/Agreements**

New Grants and Contracts received/initiated from 8/27/26 – 9/24/26

- Dalton – Stormwater Management Support - $9,500
- EOEEA - Regional Resilience Program - $445,454
- Lee - Cultural District Application - $8,000
- Egremont - Grant Administration Services - $12,000
- EOEEA - MVP - Mapping Ghost Dams of Berkshire County - $396,902
- EOEEA - MVP - Central Berkshire County Road-Stream Crossing Assessment and Prioritization - $348,511
- Peru – Technical Assistance - $2,000
- Cheshire – GIS Services - $3,000
- Berkshire Public Health Alliance - Regional Public Health Inspection Program
  - Becket - $41,000
  - Dalton - $16,650
  - Cheshire - $44,000

- Lanesborough - $39,000
- Berkshire Public Health Alliance - Regional Public Health Nursing Program
  - Adams - $4,541.68
  - Becket - $4,013.11
  - Egremont - $2,566.97
  - New Ashford - $2,483.02
  - West Stockbridge - $3,120

Grants and Contracts not received:

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

Laura mentioned the Community One Stop for Growth Awards were announced October 1st. Twenty-three awards were directed to Berkshire County. While BRPC was not a recipient, they would be a contractor for many of the awardees.

**d. Berkshires Tomorrow Inc. (BTI) Update**

*The BTI Board approved the following:*

- FY 2027 BTI Officers and Directors, Director and Officer Annual Statement of Conflict-of-Interest forms, and BTI's Check Register, from December 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026.
- The BTI President to sign an agreement with Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and any other contracts to support the FY2027 Vaccination Clinics not to exceed $10,000, including a 2% administrative fee.

*Grants and Contracts not received*

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

**e. Seasonal Communities Advisory Council Update**

The Seasonal Communities Advisory Council did not meet in September 2026. More information is at Seasonal Communities | Mass.gov.

**f. Rural Policy Advisory Commission**

The Rural Policy Advisory Commission meets every two months. During the September meeting, attendees viewed a complete file of the proposed 2026 Rural Policy Plan and were invited to provide additional photos or typographical edits. Tentative plans for RPAC members to present the new RPP to members of the administration are still being finalized.
On October 23rd Laura would be sworn in by state staff as a member of the RPAC.

**g. Massachusetts Integrated Land Use Strategy (MILUS)**

The state team from EEA along with representatives from the state's consultant for the MILUS initiative, HR&A Advisors, have been meeting with each Regional Planning Agency for preliminary discussions about site suitability ratings in the draft online tool. RPAs are in the process of inviting town officials to site suitability review meeting November 12th (originally scheduled for October). Western Mass RPAs (BRPC, PVPC, and FRCOG) will be grouped together for these site suitability conversations, as well as for site priority conversations in December.

**h. Passenger Rail**

- West-East Rail – I am not aware of any updates this month.
- Berkshire Flyer – We have requested but have not yet received an end-of-season update regarding ridership for the 2026 Berkshire Flyer.
- Northern Tier Passenger Rail – The economic benefits study continues.

On October 6th, MassDot would hold a Boston/Albany Corridor Service Development Plan meeting. Executive Committee members were encouraged to attend.

More information on these items can be found at Compass Rail | Mass.gov.

**i. Technical Assistance Report**

The technical assistance report for August is included in the packet, indicating assistance provided to the Towns of Adams, Dalton, Savoy and the City of Pittsfield.

## X. Old Business and Discussion

**a. Debrief of topics covered during the September 17, 2026 Commission Meeting**

There was no old business to discuss.

**b. Annual Meeting October 15 at Country Club of Pittsfield**

Tickets are $35/person and are available online. BRPC staff are in the process of securing a guest speaker and identifying the Kusik Award honoree for 2026. Please encourage municipal officials (elected and appointed) from your community to attend. Any municipality requiring an invoice rather than processing ticket purchases online may contact Caitlin Davis at x10 or via email: officeadministrator@berkshireplanning.org.

## XI. New Business and Discussion

**a. Topics for the November 19, 2026 Commission Meeting**

- Update from CJ Hoss (Community Development & Housing; Community Planning

Laura would like to reintroduce this series with program managers talking about their individual program areas. As CJ would present two program areas, only one speaker would be scheduled for the November Commission meeting.

## XII. Adjournment

Doug McNally made a motion to adjourn. Christine Rasmussen seconded the motion.

The motion passed with no discussion and affirmative votes from: Buck Donovan, Malcolm Fick, Sheila Irvin, Christine Rasmussen, Kyle Hanlon, Mary McGurn and Doug McNally. Sam Haupt left the meeting at 4:30pm and did not vote.

The meeting adjourned at 5:07pm.