

MONTACHUSETT JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (MJTC) MEETING
MINUTES OF November 8, 2023
Meeting Held Online through GoToMeeting.com - Hosted by the MRPC

T. Condon, MJTC Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

I. Introduction

Members

Rebecca Merrell, Ashburnham; Randy Williams, Ashburnham; Dick Kilhart, Athol; Tim Kilhart, Harvard; Elizabeth Wood, Leominster; Nick Erickson, Fitchburg; Guy Corbosiero, Winchendon

Ex-Officio and Organizations

Travis Condon, NCMCOC; Chris Klem, MassDOT OTP; Daryl Amaral, MassDOT District 2; Ben Breger, MassDOT District 2; Sarah Bradbury, MassDOT District 3; George Kahale, MART

Non-Members

Brian Doheny, Ashburnham; Roger Hoyt, Ashburnham; Chelsey Patriss, CHNA; Carolyn Sellars, Public; Joel Anders, WSP; Bruce Kaplan, WSP; Amanda Reid, Lunenburg;

Staff

Brad Harris; George Snow; Sheri Bean; Brian Doherty; Tyler Godin

II. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

III. Approval of October 11, 2023 Minutes

A consensus was reached to accept the minutes for October 11, 2023 as presented.

IV. Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee Bylaws Discussion

- Review of Article II – Membership in the Planning Group

B. Harris reviewed discussions held in both August and October about membership in the MJTC. The question was asked if an individual can be appointed as a representative to the MJTC by more than one community. The current Bylaws for the MJTC do not specifically address this issue. They merely state that a town Selectboard/Mayor and Planning Board/Department can each appoint a representative to the MJTC, thus giving the community two representatives on the committee. Overall, the town only has one vote when formal votes are taken. In order to clarify the current bylaws or to change them to allow or not allow for multiple representation by one member, a change will need to be made to them. Based on the current bylaws, a bylaw change must be brought up at two consecutive meetings in order to be acted upon. At the first meeting, discussion will be had on the issue only. At the second meeting, members can then vote on any proposed bylaw change.

The first meeting discussing the topic was at the October MJTC. This would be the second meeting, meaning a vote on a bylaw change was possible. Mr. Harris then reviewed three possible changes to the bylaw.

A. No Change to Bylaws

B. Changes as Follows

ARTICLE II - MEMBERSHIP IN THE PLANNING GROUP

2. The composition of the MJTC consensus makers shall consist of members selected in the following manner and from the following sources:
 - a. One representative of each of the cities and towns of the planning area appointed by the Planning Board of each community, annually in the month of June to assume representation on July 1, and who shall be either a member or a representative of said Planning Board.
 - b. One representative of each of the cities and towns of the planning area appointed by the Mayor, Town Manager or Selectmen of each community, annually, in the month of June to assume representation on July 1.
 - c. In addition, provisions shall be made for the addition of other members, such as representatives of public and private institutions, upon their request and appointment by the MJTC. These representatives will be identified as "Organizational" members and shall be appointed by their institution annually in the month of June to assume representation on July 1.
 - d. **An individual appointed to the MJTC can only be appointed as a representative for one community only. Appointment of the same individual by multiple communities is not allowed.**

In the event a formal vote is required and more than one representative from a community is present, members shall follow procedures outlined in Article VI – Meetings of the MJTC, Item 5 Formal Votes.

ARTICLE VI - MEETINGS OF THE MJTC

5. Formal votes. In the event that consensus cannot be reached on an issue before the MJTC, a formal vote can be requested of the representatives present and eligible to vote (i.e., communities and organizational members) through an appropriate motion and second. Each community and organizational member of the MJTC may cast only one vote regardless of the number of representatives from that community or organization present at the meeting when the vote is to occur. Final decision of the issue will be determined by a majority vote (50%+) of the representatives present and voting, provided a quorum exists.

C. Changes as Follows

ARTICLE II - MEMBERSHIP IN THE PLANNING GROUP

2. The composition of the MJTC consensus makers shall consist of members selected in the following manner and from the following sources:
 - a. One representative of each of the cities and towns of the planning area appointed by the Planning Board of each community, annually in the month of June to assume representation on July 1, and who shall be either a member or a representative of said Planning Board.
 - b. One representative of each of the cities and towns of the planning area appointed by the Mayor, Town Manager or Selectmen of each community, annually, in the month of June to assume representation on July 1.
 - c. In addition, provisions shall be made for the addition of other members, such as representatives of public and private institutions, upon their request and appointment by the MJTC. These representatives will be identified as "Organizational" members and shall be appointed by their institution annually in the month of June to assume representation on July 1.
 - d. **An individual may be appointed as a representative to the MJTC by more than one community as long as all communities involved are aware of the appointment situation and have formally agreed to the multiple appointments.** In the case of formal votes of the MJTC, an individual representing more than one community shall only be able to cast one vote on behalf of all communities they serve unless they have obtained written formal notice from the community board as to how to vote and proceed on that particular issue under review by the MJTC.

In the event a formal vote is required and more than one representative from a community is present, *or a member that represents more than one community is present*, members shall follow procedures outlined in Article VI – Meetings of the MJTC, Item 5 Formal Votes.

ARTICLE VI - MEETINGS OF THE MJTC

5. Formal votes. In the event that consensus cannot be reached on an issue before the MJTC, a formal vote can be requested of the representatives present and eligible to vote (i.e., communities and organizational members) through an appropriate motion and second. Each community and organizational member of the MJTC may cast only one vote regardless of the number of representatives from that community or organization present *or the number of communities a member is representing* at the meeting when the vote is to occur. Final decision of the issue will be determined by a majority vote (50%+) of the representatives present and voting, provided a quorum exists. *In the case an individual representing more than one community, that representative shall only be able to cast one vote on behalf of all communities they serve unless they have obtained written formal notice from the different community boards as to how to vote and proceed on that particular issue under review by the MJTC.*

It was decided by the members present to review three options presented and make a decision at the next MJTC meeting. This will give members time to evaluate what changes are really needed to address this issue.

V. Montachusett SS4A Regional Safety Action Plan

- Update and Status of Regional Safety Action Plan for the Montachusett Region

B. Harris provided an update on the status of the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Regional Safety Action Plan grant awarded to MRPC, along with MART, in 2022. He reviewed the RFP for consultants to spearhead the plan along with MRPC and MART, which responses were due back in October. We received seven responses from possible consultants. Staff have reviewed and scored all responses and are conducting interviews with finalists on November 10th. Mr. Harris briefly reviewed the budget and scope for the plan and mentioned a final decision on a consultant will be made by mid-November and planning activities will begin shortly thereafter. We have estimated a 24-month time frame for completion of the Safety Action Plan. Once completed, communities will be eligible to apply for implementation grants under this program. A copy of the RFP is provided.

VI. Montachusett FFY 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

- Review of Draft FFY 2024 Highway Amendment #1
- MJTC Recommendation to MPO on Draft Amendment #1

B. Doherty reviewed Amendment #1 of the 2024-2028 TIP, which was put out for public comment by the MPO at its October meeting. The 21-day public comment began October 25th and ends on November 14th. The purpose of the discussion was to get a recommendation from the MJTC to the MPO whether to endorse Amendment #1 at the MPO meeting on 11/15.

The proposed amendment is a cost increase to project #613167 Athol-Phillipston-Templeton Bridge Preservation of 8 Bridge Crossings Along Route 2. The project would remain in 2024 Section 1B/ Earmark or Discretionary Grant Funded Projects. The cost would increase from \$9,499,000 to \$15,189,280.45, an increase of \$5,690,280.45 or approximately 60%. The reason for the increased cost was due to inflation in construction costs since the project was initiated as well as the inclusion of full bridge painting in the project.

Consensus was to make a recommendation for the MPO to endorse Amendment #1.

VII. Contract Status Reports

a. Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

T. Godin mentioned MRPC and MART had a survey out for the MART Eastern Communities Transit Development Program (TDP) which wrapped up last week. The communities involved in this project are Ayer, Devens, Harvard, Lancaster, Littleton and Shirley. We received 126 total responses. We are now in the process of analyzing the responses and incorporating the analysis into the report. The survey has provided a lot of great input from the residents of the region which will help strengthen the report.

b. Regional Transit Administration (RTA)

G. Kahale gave the following updates from MART:

The Town of Harvard has requested a new Commuter Shuttle Service between downtown Harvard and Littleton MBTA Commuter Station to provide access to its residents to the Boston area. The new shuttle service started Monday, November 6, 2023, and will provide access to 2 trains in the AM and 2 trains in the PM. There will be 2 pick-up locations; one at Town Hall and one the Harvard Senior Center. This will also be a Fare-Free service.

The Carey Street parking improvement project has been completed, creating 50 parking spaces, and that increases our available parking for both employees as well as creating a dedicated fleet parking. Additional features of the project included security fencing, a new storm drainage system, and the burying of the utilities underground. The Project greatly improved the MART facility, provided additional and much-needed parking, a better secured physical site and hardened our utility security with upgraded lines, and secured underground conduit.

MART was recently awarded \$180,000 for Bus Shelters through the Shared Streets and Spaces Program under MassDOT for FFY23. MART has installed two Bus Shelters in Athol, four Shelters in Gardner, and one Bus Shelter in Leominster.

c. Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) 3C

S. Bean mentioned that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) is looking to apply to the next round of MassTrails Grant Funding, which opens in November - <https://www.mass.gov/guides/masstrails-grants>. The MassTrails Grant Program is administered by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and provides matching grants, technical assistance, and resources to various entities, including individuals, municipalities, and non-profits. She has reached out to communities in the region to gauge interest. Please reach out to Sheri with any further questions.

B. Harris mentioned that the MPO will be meeting next week on Wednesday November 15th at 1:00 PM. We expect that MART will be presenting an Amendment to the FFY 2024 Transit Element of the TIP.

The staff has begun work on various tasks as part of the new Work Program year. As the year moves forward, we will be bringing various elements of these studies to the MJTC. This includes a freight study for the Lancaster, Lunenburg, Shirley and Ayer area and as previously mentioned the Coordinated Human Services Plan and the Eastern Region Transit Development program.

There is a 2024 Calendar handout available that highlights the regularly scheduled meetings of the MRPC. These include the Commission meeting, usually held on the first Thursday of the month, the MJTC held on the second Wednesday and the MPO held on the third Wednesday. These dates at times are subject to change so everyone should also refer to the Upcoming Meetings listing on our website.

VIII. Administrative Matters

- Next MJTC Meeting

The next meeting will be held on December 13th at 2:30.

IX. Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 3:16 pm.

DOCUMENTS/EXHIBITS AVAILABLE AT MEETING:

- 11 8 2023 Agenda
- 10 11 2023 MJTC minutes
- 4 MJTC Bylaws revision Options 11 8 2023
- 4 MJTC Bylaws 9 17 2014
- 5 Montachusett RPC SS4A Full Budget Est
- 5 Montachusett SS4A Key Information Table & Budget
- 5 SS4A-Action Plan Components
- 6 DRAFT FFY 2024 Highway Amendment #1 Summary
- 6 Int Parties Draft TIP Amendment #1 10 2023
- 7 2024 Meeting Calendar Version 1