

# MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MRPC)



Thursday, August 6, 2020

7:00 PM

REMOTE: GoToMeeting App

## MEETING MINUTES

### 1. Open Meeting, Introductions and Announcements

G. Corbosiero called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. G. Corbosiero stated in accordance with Governor Baker's Covid-19 Executive Order regarding the Open Meeting Law and remote participation, votes will be taken through Roll Call. G. Corbosiero read the roll call.

### 2. Approval of July 2, 2020 MRPC Minutes

J. Telepciak moved that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission approve the July 2, 2020 minutes as distributed. The motion was seconded.

Roll call vote followed.

Alan Pease – yes  
Guy Corbosiero – yes  
Laura Shifrin- yes  
Roger Hoyt – yes  
Russell Williston – yes  
Patty Page – yes  
James Marino – yes  
John Telepciak – yes  
Roger Hoyt – yes  
Alyne Butland – yes  
Maribel Cruz - yes  
Bill Oelfke - yes

### 3. Cash Schedule – July 2020

G. Eaton read the July 2020 cash schedule.

Opening Balance \$333,289.57; Total receipts this month \$150,962.55; Total cash on hand before this warrant \$484,252.12; Less: amount of this warrant \$132,902.66; Balance after this warrant \$351,349.46.

A. Pease moved to accept the June 2020 cash schedule as read subject to audit and to be placed on file. The motion was seconded.

Roll call vote followed.

Alan Pease – yes  
Guy Corbosiero – yes  
Laura Shifrin- yes  
Roger Hoyt – yes  
Russell Williston – yes  
Patty Page – yes  
James Marino – yes  
John Telepciak – yes  
Roger Hoyt – yes  
Alyne Butland – yes  
Maribel Cruz - yes  
Bill Oelfke - yes

#### **4. Administrative Matters**

##### **4.1 FY21 Budget Update and Corrections**

G. Eaton presented the FY21 Budget Update and Corrections.

He explained that the Fiscal Manager (Linda Quinlivan) and Administrative and Human Resources (Linda Parmenter) provided the Executive Director with more accurate “direct” expenses; these are expenses that are included in individual contracts and are not “overhead” expenses. The names of the relevant line items and examples for each include:

1. Consultant Fees
  - a. BETA Group is a consultant to the MRPC under the Brownfields Environmental Site Assessment (EPA) grant awarded to the MRPC, last year
2. Travel
  - a. Travel within Massachusetts (generally speaking) for a meeting with local officials held in public buildings (i.e. town halls) or another purpose that is directly-related to the delivery of a service – reimbursing traffic interns for traffic counting tasks completed in the region
3. Advertising
  - a. Advertising costs related to promoting a public meeting such as a charrette seeking public input for a local master plan
4. Conference/Meetings/Trainings
  - a. This line item is used to pay for the expenses to send staff in-state and out-of-state for educational training sessions (note that this line item is currently budgeted at \$0.00)
5. License Fees
  - a. Subscriptions for online software applications or “apps”
6. Equipment Purchase
  - a. Phone system update, computers and peripherals – In FY20 the MRPC acquired a new phone system (the one we were using was approximately 15 years old and the technology was starting to fail) - this summer the MRPC will update all computers (the last purchase was made in 2016 and our computer tech is breaking down)
7. Miscellaneous Expenses
  - a. Very rarely used, but this line item is for expenses where there is no, clear category
8. Office Supplies
  - a. Self-explanatory
9. Printing Expenses
  - a. Printing of final reports (though rare, we are still required to print reports - outsourcing the printing of some reports can be very cost-effective)
10. Computer Software

- a. Self-explanatory
- 11. Traffic Counting
  - a. The funds in this line item are used to pay for traffic counting equipment and repairs to same
- 12. OTHER
  - a. The best example, this fiscal year, is the grant from the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office (AGO) for \$25,000 to provide grants to enterprises under the Small Business Assistance Program

J. Telepciak moved to accept the FY21 Budget Update as presented. The motion was seconded.

Roll call vote followed.

Alan Pease – yes  
 Guy Corbosiero – yes  
 Laura Shifrin- yes  
 Roger Hoyt – yes  
 Russell Williston – yes  
 Patty Page – yes  
 James Marino – yes  
 John Telepciak – yes  
 Roger Hoyt – yes  
 Alyne Butland – yes  
 Maribel Cruz – yes  
 Bill Oelfke - yes

#### **4.2 Compensation Plan**

G. Eaton explained that last fiscal year the MRPC funded and hired a salary analysis consultant. After following procurement (in accordance with the State's procurement statute) MRPC engage James Gray of Burlington, MA. Mr. Eaton indicated that the salary plan would be implemented no earlier than July 1, 2021, funding allowable.

#### **4.3 Orientations for Commissioners**

The numbers of non-duplicated attendees at the three orientation for Commissioners that attended earlier this week were:

- Monday two Commissioners and two employees
- Tuesday afternoon two Commissioners and two employees
- Tuesday evening three Commissioners and one employee

#### **4.4 Strategic Planning Process**

Mr. Eaton proposed that the MRPC and MEC, Inc. commence a strategic planning process. He will provide more information about the process at the September 2020 meeting of the Commissioners.

#### **Additional Updates**

- MRPC New Grant Award and Staffing Needs
  - A new, \$400,000 Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant has been awarded to the MRPC. This grant has been provided to the MRPC as we are a federally-designated economic development district. The funds will be used to engage 1.25 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff to provide assistance to communities and the business community during the COVID-19

pandemic, update to Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) in light of current and future economic conditions, and provide related services. We've received approximately 20 applications for the Economic Development Manager position and another ten applications for the Economic Development Intern job. Applications are due through Monday, August 10th ("open until filled"). We'll conduct interviews as early as next week and return to the Commissioners with a request for approval to hire two individuals at the next meeting to be held on September 3rd, 2020.

- Related to the above and tonight's budget presentation the MRPC will have to engage a temporary full- or part-time planner to provide planning assistance to our communities related to the District Local Technical Assistance and other projects in the Planning and Development Department. We will return to the Commission on September 3rd with a hiring recommendation after advertising a position.
- Surveys
  - Commissioners' Survey
    - Mr. Eaton informed the group that he would be surveying the Commissioners to learn if they would prefer to meet during the day, versus the evening, for monthly meetings.
  - Westminster Public Safety Facility Survey
    - Mr. Eaton informed the group that he spoke with the Westminster Police Chief concerning completing a survey for the community regarding the possible construction of a new public safety facility

## 5. Status Reports

Discussion occurred on the status of employees and visitors at the office space due to the Pandemic. Until further guidance is received from the State it will remain status quo.

### 5.1 Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

#### **MRMapper & MOBILE APPS (GENERAL)**

Data and applications are continuously being updated throughout the year. Check <https://mrmapper.mrpc.org> periodically for updates.

#### **COMMUNITY-RELATED**

- Lunenburg Conservation Lands Mapping – The Lunenburg Conservation Commission received a grant to create and install maps at the intersections of the trails on its properties. We will be working on creating a series of "You Are Here" maps that will be installed at the kiosks and intersections of multiple conservation maps. We have reached out to the town to begin discussing the specifics of the maps and we are currently wait for a response. This project will be ongoing for the next several months.
- Winchendon Zoning Map Updates – We are in the process of updating the Official Zoning Map for the Town of Winchendon. The decision was made to update the zoning layers to match the current parcel data where applicable. This project is on hold until the Town can collect data regarding the origins of the zoning districts and provide it to the MRPC.
- Templeton Cemetery – We are working with the Town of Templeton to update their cemetery GIS data. The updated data will be used to create internal (with editing/database maintenance functionality) and public MRMapper WebApps. A draft data set was sent to the Town for its review and we are awaiting a response to finalize the data. A draft WebApp has been created and tested. Once the data is finalized, we will finalize the WebApp and present it to the Town for their review. This project should will be ongoing for the next few months.
- Ayer Parcel Maintenance – We finished updating the Town of Ayer's parcel data and MRMapper sites. This project has been completed.

- Clinton Parcel Maintenance – We are in the process of updating the Town of Clinton’s parcel data and MRMapper sites. We are waiting for the updated extract from the Town’s Assessor. This project is expected to be completed by the end of August.
- Townsend Parcel Maintenance – We are in the process of updating the Town of Townsend’s parcel data and MRMapper sites. We are waiting for more information from the Town’s Assessor. This project is expected to be completed by the end of August.

## COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING-RELATED

- ADA Compliance Checklist Survey Creation – We’ve created four digital surveys that can be completed out in the field using tablets. They will be used by MRPC staff to inventory the features and amenities of public spaces to see if they are ADA compliant. We developed a training manual for staff to use to complete these digital surveys and we will continue to provide any technical assistance as needed until the project is complete. Planning staff recently began the data collection process. This project will be ongoing throughout the summer.
- DLTA
  - Westminster OS Update – We have sent the nine draft maps to the Town Planner. He will review them with his committee and give us any feedback which we will incorporate. Once the Action Plan Concepts are finalized in late fall by the committee, we will map them out and update the Five-Year Action Plan map and the Unique Features map. We have also begun to update the data tables in Section 3. This project will be ongoing for the next several months.
  - Harvard Buildout Analysis – We are currently working with the Town on a buildout style analysis. We will develop a scenario-modeling spreadsheet and series of maps detailing current areas of developed, absolute and partial development constraints and developable lands in Town. The goal will be to assess what current zoning will result in regarding full development in terms of housing units, school children and miles of new road.
  - Shirley Housing Production Plan – We have been asked to identify all of the town-owned parcels in Shirley. Using the most-recently updated data from MassGIS, we will create a layer of absolute and partial development constraints and use that to determine the level of development constraint for the town-owned parcels that we identified. Using the level of constraint and knowledge from the town, we will determine if the town-owned parcels are developable or possibly developable for housing. The list of town-owned parcels and their level of constraint will be complete by the end of August and the entire project is expected to be completed by the end of December.
  - Transportation Chapter of the Sterling Master Plan – We identified the roadway intersections in Sterling and created 200-foot buffers around them. We then compiled 2017-2019 crash data for the town of Sterling and identified the intersection buffer they were located in. For the crashes that didn’t fall within an intersection buffer, we created 200-foot buffers around them and grouped them together. Transportation staff analyzed the data to identify the crash clusters and we created maps highlighting the crash clusters. We provided statistics about commuting habits and crashes that involved pedestrians and other non-motorists and information regarding the structurally deficit bridges in town. We also calculated the mileage of the roadways based upon their classifications and made a map with the roadways symbolized by their classification and urban type. This project has been completed.

## TRANSPORTATION-RELATED

- Trail Data Application – We are in the process of finalizing two applications that will allow communities to update the existing Trail Inventory data in ‘live’ or ‘offline’ (disconnected) editing session. We met with a group to review the applications and databases and are working on updating those based on feedback. The next step will be to deploy the application and setup training sessions. This project will be ongoing throughout the summer.
- Bike Inventory – We symbolized the heat map to only show the most popular bike routes and updated the internal MRMapper application in order to facilitate analysis. Our portion of this project is complete at the moment but we will continue to provide support and technical assistance as necessary.

- MRPC Travel by Tourism – No new information but we will continue to provide support, information, and maps as needed. This project will be ongoing.
- Roadway Safety Improvement Project – We updated the map of regional fatal crash clusters to reflect the new changes in the updated report. We also created a map that will be used for the cover of the report. We have made the fatal crash locations available as a layer in the MRMapper apps. Our portion of project has been completed.
- UPWP Freight Corridor Analysis – We have been asked to identify the 2017-2019 crashes in the Montachusett region that involved any freight vehicles. If we find that there were not enough crashes in this time period to complete a proper analysis, we may be instructed to expand the time period to 2010-2019. This project will be completed by September.

## **TRANSIT-RELATED**

- MART Stop Count – Having previously identified all of the individual stops (both currently scheduled and recommended by bound), we finalized the numbers of stops that are outbound scheduled, outbound recommended, inbound scheduled, and inbound recommended for all of the routes managed by MART. This project has been completed but we will answer any questions about the methodology used to complete the counts.

## **5.2 Planning and Development**

### *Comprehensive Planning Division*

#### **FEDERAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (EDA)**

On July 21, 2020 MRPC was awarded a two-year duration grant for \$400,000 from EDA for the following:

1. Short-term and long-term economic development planning and coordination to update the Montachusett Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) focused on pandemic recovery and resiliency.
2. Funding for MRPC to hire an Economic Development Manager for a two-year period to serve the communities and local governments and work with business leaders across the geographic region to stimulate economic growth within the business community.
3. Enhance MRPC capacity support for coronavirus response, including technology costs and personnel costs for MRPC staff members directly working on or supporting the work of the coronavirus-related economic development response.

MRPC is advertising to hire an Economic Development Manager and a Planner Intern to work on the scope of work for this grant.

#### **FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA), MONTACHUSETT REGION BROWNFIELDS ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

A Montachusett Brownfields Group meeting was held on July 16<sup>th</sup> and a vote was taken to approve a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment on 49 Snow Street, Fitchburg. This 3-year grant award, beginning October 1, 2019, was for \$300,000; and, \$111,151.52 remain to conduct additional Environmental Site Assessments (ESA). MRPC Communities are encouraged to contact John Hume ([jhume@mrpc.org](mailto:jhume@mrpc.org)) if there is an interest in conducting a Phase I or Phase II ESA in your community.

Work continues on the following projects:

- **Fitchburg:** 49 Snow Street Phase II Environmental Site Assessment.
- **Lunenburg:** 925 Massachusetts Avenue Phase II Environmental Site Assessment.
- **Winchendon:** 4 Summer Drive. Phase II Environmental Site Assessment.

## **MASSACHUSETTS EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS (EOEEA)**

MRPC was awarded an FY20 Planning Assistance grant for \$48,000 last winter to fund Master Plan Chapters for the Town of Hubbardston. MRPC staff completed the Transportation Element. In July, MRPC staff presented a draft Services and Facilities inventory and analysis to the Hubbardston Planning Board and is now working to address input and edits that were received at that meeting. MRPC staff has also been working on the Housing Element.

## **DISTRICT LOCAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (DLTA)**

MRPC staff is working on the following projects:

1. **Ashburnham:** Housing Master Plan Chapter and Wetlands Bylaw Update; Project Manager, Karen Chapman
  - A scope of work and contract has been executed and work has commenced. A virtual meeting is scheduled with the Planning Board on August 12th.
2. **Ashby:** Natural Resource Protection Bylaw; Project Manager, John Hume and Karen Chapman
  - A scope of work and contract has been forwarded to the community and work should be ready to be initiated shortly.
3. **Athol:** Millers River Greenway Planning Assistance; Project Manager, John Hume and Karen Chapman.
  - MRPC staff met virtually with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments who are partners in this project and will be working for the Town of Orange. A scope of work is finalized and a contract has been signed by the community and work has been initiated.
4. **Athol:** Urban Renewal Planning Assistance (Phase 2).
  - MRPC's Executive Director is creating a contract for services with Athol and will have presented last year's Urban renewal Planning work to local officials by August 6<sup>th</sup>;
5. **Ayer:** ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan. Project matched with ADA Planning Grant from MA Office on Disability to the Town of Ayer. Project Manager, John Hume and Jonathan Vos.
  - This project is unique in that it is being matched with an ADA Planning Grant from the MA Office on Disability to the Town of Ayer. MRPC is also contributing to the project in terms of Public Rights of Way (PROW) where MRPC's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) funds are being used to complete this component. While the project has been delayed because of no access to municipal buildings due to COVID-19, MRPC held a virtual kickoff meeting on July 9, 2020 with local officials and work was able to commence during the week of July 20 when MRPC performed a self-evaluation at the municipal Fire Department and the Police Department.
6. **Harvard:** Build-Out Analysis Update and Fiscal Impact Analysis; Project Manager, John Hume
  - MRPC is in the process of developing buildout maps and creating a narrative report of results. MRPC, with assistance from a subcontractor (Mullin Associates) will then perform a fiscal impact analysis evaluating each of the land uses provided by the buildout analysis. Mullin Associates will build a residential model and non-residential model and MRPC will use the models for scenario simulations.
7. **Hubbardston:** Land Use Master Plan Chapter; Project Manager, John Hume
  - A scope of work and a contract was reviewed by local officials and presented to the Hubbardston Planning Board. The contract was signed by MRPC and the Town. The inventory and analysis section has been initiated. This project is unique and presents an excellent opportunity to allow the Town to come closer

to finalizing its Master Plan since the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission was awarded an FY20 Planning Assistance Grant to fund Master Plan Chapters from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs which include Statement of Goals and Objectives, Transportation, Services and Facilities, Open Space and Recreation, and Housing.

8. **Lancaster:** Draft language for a new center-village zoning district or overlay district; Project Manager, Karen Chapman
  - MRPC staff is working with the town to develop an acceptable scope of work and contract.
9. **Lunenburg:** ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan (Phase 2); Project Manager, John Hume and Jonathan Vos.
  - Phase 1 was completed using the last round of DLTA; Due to COVID-19, access to municipal buildings was not possible, delaying this project. It is anticipated that this project can commence relatively soon sometime this summer.
10. **Petersham:** Community survey, facilitating public input at community meetings, and identifying any funding options concerning the Nichewaug Inn & Academy building; Project Manager, Karen Chapman
  - A scope of work and contract with the community has been finalized and MRPC staff has attended several meetings with local officials concerning the site's potential reuse.
11. **Shirley:** Housing Production Plan; Project Manager, Karen Chapman
  - MRPC staff has a final scope of work and a signed contract with the community and met with the Planning Board in July to review the scope/contract and discuss the project.
12. **Sterling:** Transportation Master Plan Chapter; Project Manager, John Hume
  - MRPC has a final scope of work and a signed contract with the community. MRPC staff worked on and completed a draft Inventory and Analysis section of the Transportation Element and presented the draft version to the Sterling Master Plan Committee on July 23<sup>rd</sup>. MRPC staff will now be addressing edits/comments.
13. **Sterling:** Implementation of Housing Production Plan Action Items: A. Amend accessory apartment bylaw and incorporate accessory apartments into the Subsidized Housing Inventory, and; B. Explore adoption of affordable housing on non-complying lots; Project Manager, Karen Chapman
  - MRPC has a final scope of work and a signed contract with the community and met with Sterling's Housing Committee in July to discuss the project.
14. **Townsend:** Amend zoning bylaws to provide more age restricted market rate housing opportunities in Town; Project Manager, John Hume;
  - MRPC completed a draft scope of work/contract that was discussed with local officials at a virtual meeting. The scope of work/contract was finalized and is in the process of being signed by the community.
15. **Townsend:** Provide statistical data to confirm the feasibility of the Town adopting M.G.L. 43D – Expedited Local Permitting Program; Project Manager, John Hume
  - MRPC staff forwarded a draft scope of work/contract to the community which is being reviewed prior to execution of the contract.
16. **Westminster:** Open Space and Recreation Plan update assistance (maps and statistics generated from maps, and updating tables in Community Setting Section); Project Manager, John Hume and Jason Stanton
  - A scope of work and contract was finalized and executed. MRPC GIS Department finished a draft update of a number of maps and forwarded them to Westminster for review.

Please contact John Hume, Planning and Development Director, Karen Chapman, Senior Planner, and/or Jonathan Vos, Regional Planner for further information concerning the District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) program.

## **MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY RESOURCES (DOER)**

MRPC staff are also assisting the Towns of Royalston and Ashby under their Green Communities Grant Award administrative costs with tasks associated with managing the grant awards such as reporting, procurement, and data management. MRPC staff completed an Information for Bidders (IFB) document, with attachments, for lighting improvements to be completed at Ashby's elementary School. In Royalston. MRPC will also perform these tasks under administrative costs of the grant awards for Groton, Hubbardston, Templeton, Athol, and Lunenburg.



MRPC staff assisted the Towns of Athol and Lunenburg under REPA to develop Competitive Grant Applications which were successfully submitted to DOER May 1st. We have yet to hear if these grants were awarded.

MRPC staff are also assisting the Towns of Royalston and Ashby under their Green Communities Grant Award administrative costs with tasks associated with managing the grant awards such as reporting, procurement, and data management. MRPC will also perform these tasks under administrative costs of the grant awards for Groton, Hubbardston, Templeton, Athol, and Lunenburg.

#### **AYER ADA SELF-EVALUATION AND TRANSITION PLAN**

The MRPC has a contract with the Town of Ayer for \$30,000 to complete this plan. The Town is utilizing an ADA Planning Grant Award from the MA Office on Disability to the Town of Ayer and the project is also using MRPC DLTA Program for matching funds. Moreover, MRPC is contributing to the project in terms of Public Rights of Way (PROW) where MRPC's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) (Transportation Department) funds are being used to complete this component. While the project has been delayed because of no access to municipal buildings due to COVID-19, MRPC held a virtual kickoff meeting on July 9, 2020 with local officials. Work commenced during the week of July 20. MRPC will perform self-evaluation at 10 buildings including programs and services provided within and identify compliance status of each facility with regards to both federal and state standards.

#### **HEALTHY AGING TUFTS MOMENTUM FUND**

MRPC has a \$10,000 grant for a pilot program to assist the Towns of Ashburnham, Westminster, and Winchendon to become certified Age Friendly. This contract ends December, 2020. MRPC staff has established contact with all participating communities and have begun to create working groups. Ground work has initiated with the data gathering stage to discover the current state of the towns and how the communities currently line up with Healthy Aging Best Practices.

#### **HEALTHY AGING TUFTS FUND**

MRPC was awarded a \$75,000 grant to help all of the non-Age Friendly communities in the Montachusett Region become certified as Age Friendly. MRPC received the executed contract on July 24, 2020. Now that MRPC has an executed contract, invitations will be sent out to all non-Age Friendly communities to a kick-off introductory virtual meeting to go over the Age Friendly process, answer questions, and establish working groups with each participating community.

#### **MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (MA DOT), MORE RIDES PLANNING PROJECT**

The Montachusett Enterprise Center (MEC) was awarded \$48,000 by MA DOT with an executed contract received July 23, 2020 with an end date of December 31, 2020. Seniors and disabled residents within the Montachusett Region have expressed persistent gaps in transportation access for many needs – primarily medical, employment, education, and other health/social services. MRPC staff will work to identify the resources and partners needed to create a Transportation Connections program to help address these gaps within the Greater Gardner Area, (Ashburnham, Gardner, Hubbardston, Templeton, Westminster, and Winchendon).

The scope of this project will be to convene a steering committee that will evaluate other community ride connector programs, and design a similar program serving the Greater Gardner community. Seniors and disabled residents are the primary intended audience of the More Rides program. The primary intention of the proposed project is to ensure these community members have reliable and affordable transportation to critical services including healthcare appointments, grocery store visits, and to and from places of education and employment.

## **MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (MA DOT) WINCHENDON VOLUNTEER DRIVER PLANNING PROJECT**

The Montachusett Enterprise Center (MEC) was awarded \$24,000 by MA DOT with an executed contract received July 23, 2020 with an end date of December 31, 2020. Seniors and disabled residents within the Montachusett Region have expressed persistent gaps in transportation access for many needs – primarily medical, employment, education, and other health/social services. Montachusett Regional Planning Commission staff will work on this project develop strategies to address gaps in service for residents in need. The project will study the feasibility of – and develop an implementation plan for – a volunteer driver program serving seniors and disabled residents in Winchendon. A successful program would ensure reliable transportation for residents in need to attend their medical appointments, purchase groceries (particularly important due to concerns of food access in Winchendon), and help guarantee access to other necessary services.

## **MA DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY RESOURCES (DOER), AFFORDABLE ACCESS REGIONAL COORDINATION (AARC)**

A grant in the amount of \$104,039 has been received from the MA Department of Energy Resources (DOER). The DOER's Green Communities Division is funding Regional Planning Agencies to develop programs and provide clean energy training to municipal or community organizations that support low income populations. This funding will allow RPAs to increase knowledge of the Commonwealth's low income residential clean energy programs, expanding the reach of existing successful programs. The contract began October 9, 2019 and ends September 30, 2021. MRPC will be scheduling outreach meetings and training in all our communities as soon as we are allowed to under COVID-19 restrictions.

### ***Community Development Division***

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT-COVID (CDBG-CV) RESPONSE PROGRAM**

A CDBG-CV proposal for \$264,500 (submitted in June) was awarded for \$296,100 (in July). These funds have been made available to communities under the initial CARES Act. Working with a five-town consortium, the Executive Director prepared the CDBG-CV proposal on behalf of Shirley (lead community), Lunenburg, Royalston, Townsend, and Westminster. The uses of the funds are, as follows:

- Microenterprise Assistance                      \$223,894.14
  - Very small business (up to five employees) grants up to \$10,000/business
- Food Banks Assistance                              33,584.12
  - Three, \$10,000 grants to food banks in three of the towns
- Administration                                      38,621.74
  - MRPC CDBG-CV Management
- Total Grant Award                                  \$296,100.00

The Town of Shirley awaits the receipt of the grant agreement from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). MRPC staff will prepare grant management contract between Shirley and the regional planning agency as soon as the grant agreement has been received by Shirley.

### **MONTACHUSETT ENTERPRISE CENTER, INC.**

An annual meeting of the MEC's Board of Directors will be held by September 30, 2020.

### **5.3 Transit**

#### **AYER DEPOT SQUARE PEDESTRIAN PLAZA**

During the past month, MRPC Transit Projects Director continues to assist MART, the Town of Ayer, and working in conjunction with the Weston & Sampson to finish the construction of the Depot Square pedestrian plaza located at the MBTA Station. The project will include: transit vehicles turn around; pedestrian plaza; restroom facility; pedestrian access to the station; and, a shelter for commuters. Depot Square Improvement Phase I is being completed by RA Powell Construction Corp. of Lunenburg. MART anticipate completion of the project by September 30, 2020.

### **5.4 Transportation**

#### **MONTACHUSETT JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (MJTC)**

At the July 8th MJTC meeting, the following individuals were elected as officers for the upcoming year.

- Chair – Jon Wyman, Westminster
- Vice Chair – Nicolas Bosonetto, Fitchburg
- Secretary – Tracy Murphy, Winchendon

In addition, the MJTC decided to cancel the August meeting. The next meeting will be held on September 9, 2020 at 2:30 pm.

#### **MONTACHUSETT METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)**

At the July 15<sup>th</sup> MPO meeting, the members voted to endorse the budget Amendment to the FFY 2020 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) discussed at past meetings. Subsequently, a formal request form has been submitted to MassDOT for final approval.

The Montachusett Regional Transit Authority (MART) provided a presentation the illustrated the impact that the pandemic and its restriction have had on their ridership.

The MPO also decided to cancel the August meeting. The next meeting will therefore be held on September 16, 2020 at 1:00 pm.

#### **MASSDOT ANNOUNCES \$1 MILLION IN AWARDS FOR THE SHARED STREETS & SPACES PROGRAM**

Through a news release the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) announced the award of over \$1 million for the first round of funding in the newly announced Shared Streets & Spaces Program. The program, which was launched on June 10, provides technical and funding assistance to help Massachusetts cities and towns conceive, design and implement tactical changes to curbs, streets, on-street parking spaces and off-street parking lots in support of public health, safe mobility, and renewed commerce in their communities. The first round of funding is going to 12 communities: Buckland, Chelsea, Lexington, Lowell, Medford, Nantucket, Natick, Northampton, Provincetown, Somerville, Wareham and Webster.

MassDOT has allocated a total of \$5 million for this 100-day program. Applications are being accepted through **September 29** and projects must be mostly or completely implemented by October 9. Preference will be given to projects that can be operational within 15-30 days of award, projects in designated Environmental Justice areas and projects that show strong potential to be made permanent.

## NEWS RELEASE - FITCHBURG DPW ANNOUNCES COMPLETION OF FRANKLIN ROAD SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

The following is from a news release from the City of Fitchburg:

*Last week DPW completed the Safe Routes to School and intersection safety improvements along the Franklin Road corridor from Reingold Elementary School to the Oak Hill Road intersection. This project was a collaboration with the Fitchburg School Department, Fitchburg Police, MassDOT Safe Routes to School, and the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC).*

*The project improved the pedestrian walking route by adding 7 ADA ramps, 14 school zone signs, 3 stop signs, 5 crosswalks and stop bars along Franklin Road. Additionally, through the generous donation from Fitchburg State College, 2 flashing pedestrian crossing signs were installed at the Oak Hill Road intersection.*

*Safety improvements were also made to the intersection of Oak Hill Road and Franklin Road. This intersection ranks #123 in MassDOT's top 200 crash locations in the Commonwealth with 13 injury crashes and 8 property damage crashes in a 3-year period. In close coordination with FPD and the Cleghorn House of Pizza, DPW redefined the intersection by building sidewalks along the southwestern corner and installing two flashing stop signs for northbound traffic. Double stop signs were also installed on the southbound approach and as previously mentioned two flashing pedestrian signs were installed on the western approach. As an additional benefit, DPW rebuilt two catch basins and installed a small rain-garden to aid in stormwater infiltration and add aesthetic value to the intersection.*

*Overall, the intersection is now better defined and more visible to vehicular traffic which will hopefully reduce the number of vehicles running the stop sign and decrease the resulting side-impact crashes. DPW and FPD will continue to work with the abutting property owners to remove fences and shrubbery to increase sight-lines distances at the intersection. The sidewalks connecting the newly installed ADA ramps are still in need of reconstruction and DPW is tentatively scheduling them for construction in the summer of 2021 as a separate project.*

**Next MJTC Meeting – September 9, 2020 at 2:30 PM at MRPC Offices**

**Next MPO Meeting – September 16, 2020 at 1:00 PM at MRPC Offices**

### 6. New Business

G. Corbosiero reminded all that the position of MRPC Secretary was still vacant if anyone was interested in serving. G. Eaton stated that the next MRPC Meeting will be held on September 3, 2020 time to be determined based on the results of the survey.

### 7. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Meeting Attendance					
Name	M/A	Representing	Appointment Date	PRESENT	ABSENT
Ashburnham BOS	A	Ashburnham	7.2020		X
Hoyt, Roger	M	Ashburnham	7.2011	X	
Pease, Alan	M	Ashby	7.2001	X	
Stacy, Wayne	A	Ashby	7.2005		X

Doherty, Jacqueline	M	Athol	7.2020		X
Rebecca Bialecki	A	Athol	7.2017		X
Vacant	M	Ayer			X
Vacant	A	Ayer			X
Duffy, Phil	M	Clinton	12.2011		X
Vacant	A	Clinton			X
Lowitt, Peter	N/V	DREZ	7.2001		X
Butland, Alyne	M	Fitchburg	7.2020	X	
Skwierawski, Tom	A	Fitchburg	7.2020		X
Swartz, Robert	M	Gardner	7.2019		X
Cruz, Maribel	A	Gardner	8.2017	X	
Burke, Russ	M	Groton	7.2016		X
Vacant	A	Groton			X
Donahue, Stacia	M	Harvard	7.2018		X
Vacant	A	Harvard			X
Vacant	M	Hubbardston	7.2016		X
Stauder, Michael	A	Hubbardston			X
Christopher, Thomas	A	Lancaster	7.2016		X
Williston, Russell	M	Lancaster	11.2018	X	
Carignan, Thomas	M	Leominster	7.2019		X
Vacant	A	Leominster			X
Bertram, Paula	M	Lunenburg	7.2019		X
Marino, James	A	Lunenburg	7.2020	X	
Vacant	M	Petersham			X
Allen, Nancy	A	Petersham	7.2015		X
Vacant	M	Phillipston			X
Telepciak, John	A	Phillipston	10.201	X	
Natrowicz, Kyle	M	Royalston	7.2015		X
Barclay, James	A	Royalston	7.2017		X
Oelfke, Bill	A	Shirley	7.2020	X	
Yocum, Barbara	M	Shirley	8.2017		

Page, Patty	M	Sterling	7.2019	X	
Maki, Dick	A	Sterling	7.2014		X
Rich, Dennis	M	Templeton	7.2017		X
Bennett, Jeff	A	Templeton	7.2020		X
Shifrin, Laura	M	Townsend	7.2018	X	
Vacant	A	Townsend			X
Smith, Mike	M	Westminster	7.2019		X
Vacant	A	Westminster			X
Corbosiero, Guy	M	Winchendon	7.2011	X	
Ward, Rick	A	Winchendon	7.2019	X	

STAFF PRESENT: Glenn Eaton, George Kahale, Jason Stanton, Brad Harris

GUESTS PRESENT: Mark Archambault, Shaun Copeland, Lisa Durant

**DOCUMENTS/EXHIBITS DISTRIBUTED AT MEETING:**

July 2, 2020 MRPC Minutes  
August 6, 2020 Meeting Handout  
FY21 Budget (revised)  
2020 Compensation Plan  
Shared Streets and Spaces Program  
MassDOT News Release 7 17 20  
MART Ridership in COVID area  
July 2020 MRPC Cash schedule