



MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MRPC)

REMOTE MEETING

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2023, 7:00 PM

MRPC Meeting Material:

[September 7, 2023 MRPC Meeting Material](#)

MINUTES

1. Open Meeting, Introductions and Announcements

This meeting was held under Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, signed by Governor Healey on March 29, 2023, allowing local and regional governments to hold public meetings remotely or in a hybrid fashion. All votes will be taken by roll call.

Chairperson L. Shifrin called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, September 7, 2023.

2. MRPC Minutes – August 3, 2023 – Approval of Commissioners Requested

Having no objections, A. Pease moved to accept the August 3, 2023 minutes as presented. The motion was seconded.

Roll call vote followed:

A. Pease- yes
A. Reid- yes
K. Munroe- yes
L. Shifrin- yes
P. Cunningham- abstain
R. Ward- yes
R. Hoyt- yes
S. Donahue- yes

3. Cash Schedule – August 2023 – Acceptance of Commissioners Requested

C. McNamara presented the August 2023 Cash Schedule. The opening balance for August 1, 2023 was \$750,805.63, total receipts and transfers for the month were \$138,221.80, total cash on hand before this warrant was \$889,027.43, less the amount of this warrant \$167,899.55, left a balance after the warrant of \$721,127.88.

Having no objections, P. Cunningham moved to accept the June 2023 cash schedule as presented subject to audit. The motion was seconded.

Roll call vote followed:

A. Pease- yes
A. Reid- yes
K. Munroe- yes
K. Nartowicz- yes
L. Shifrin- yes
P. Cunningham- yes
R. Ward- yes
R. Hoyt- yes
S. Donahue- yes
T. Toth- yes

4. Guest Announcements and Questions

No announcements or questions were presented.

5. Policy and Legislative Updates

5.1 Shaun Suhoski, Member, Rural Policy Advisory Commission (RPAC) Update

S. Suhoski was unable to attend the meeting and will be rescheduled.

5.2 Irene Congdon, Municipal Assistance Coordinator Introduction and Appreciation to Tessa Davis for 19 Years as the Director of MassToss Working on Implementing Waste Reduction Plan Created by MRPC, Rural Community Assistance Program (RCAP) and MasDEP in 2005

I. Congdon presented a slide presentation which is included in the folder.

Ms. Congdon is the Regional Recycling Co-Ordinator for Central Massachusetts with Mass DEP. Ms. Congdon works with 75 communities and has done this for over 20 years. Ms. Congdon helps the Board of Health and the DPW with grants and learning how to reduce trash. Subjects addressed are recycling, composting re-use and hazardous waste.

Ms. Congdon recognized Tessa Davis for her 19 years of service as the Director of MassToss and her roll and the accomplishments she had achieved while in her position.

The slide presentation shows just how effective the program is in the reduction of waste. More people are using facilities for waste reduction, which Ms. Davis worked tirelessly on helping people get access to. From attending events, presenting at events and delivering bins for events, Ms. Davis was there.

There will be a Zero Waste event on October 21, 2023. It will be held at the Ayer Shirley Middle School.

The state goal is to reduce trash by 30%. Communities will be recognized when they reduce their waste by 30%, they will be recognized.

P. Cunningham recognized Ms. Davis for her part in helping Groton with their glass crushing and recycling. This material is not being used by the Highway Department in different places. It has been a very positive experience. Additionally, many are using their organized transfer station.

Another positive for the Groton community is Black Earth recycling. People can take organic materials there and after a couple weeks they will get back compost to use in their gardens or yards.

Any questions for Irene can be sent to icongdon@mrpc.org or you can go to www.recyclesmartma.org which shows all information about what can be recycled in the MA.

(6.1 was addressed prior to 5.3 due to a delay in arrival of our guest speaker)

5.3 Mara Shulman, Conservation Law Foundation – Pending Legislation (Updating the Bottle Bill and the Single-Use Plastic Bag Ban at Checkout)

K. Pecci presented on behalf of M. Shulman. Ms. Pecci is an attorney and is also the Director of an organization called Just Zero. Just Zero is a national zero waste organization.

Ms. Pecci's topics included the waste problem as a whole in Massachusetts as well as two pending bills; the expansion of the bottle bill and the plastic bag ban. Any questions about other bills or if anyone would like a more complete list of what is in play regarding waste issues, you can reach out to her directly at kpecci@just-zero.org.

Please see the PowerPoint presentation included with the handouts for the meeting for more information.

P. Cunningham asked what communities could do during the transitioning stage such as going to using incinerators to dispose of trash? K. Pecci stated to start, we could reduce the food and yard waste. Start composting. Recycle paper and cardboard, educate more on what can be recycled and then do it. We could do better with using recycled materials during construction. Bottom line is education on what can and cannot be recycled and then do it. Be committed.

P. Cunningham asked if there is a specific bill number that she is looking for support on? K. Pecci stated yes, house bill number #784/ senate bill #477 and house bill # 3676.

6. Administrative Matters

6.1 Proposed Budget Amendment and Hiring and Promotions Report and Resolution for Multiple Positions

G. Eaton gave an overall presentation of the current budget. Specifically, the removal of the grant funds listed for the Lancaster Master Plan Update and the Westminster Master Plan Update so we can dial in to revenue and expenditures. We will plug those numbers back into the budget once grant announcements happen. The consultant line item was changed from \$15, 000 to \$50,000 for the proposed hiring of Dexterity Management.

P Cunningham asked if it is legal for MRPC to carry a deficit? G. Eaton stated because we are not a municipality, the short answer is yes. We want to be transparent with funding and expenses.

REPORT: Proposed New Hires

Proposed New Hire: Mr. Joseph Boyle, Principal Planner, and Cory Castle, Intern, Planning and Development Department

As of the most recent FY24 Budget update, the agency has a projected surplus of \$197,000. This indicates that the number of contracts and services that need to be delivered by the MRPC outweighs the number of employees available to deliver the contracted services. MRPC will only earn the projected surplus if and when the agency hires a sufficient number of employees to deliver the contracted services.

Proposed New Hire: Mr. Cory Castle, Intern, Planning and Development

The Executive Director recommends the hiring of Mr. Cory Castle as a part-time employee, not to exceed \$17.00 per hour, at no more than 18.5 hours weekly, through June 30, 2024, funding allowing. He will work in the Planning and Development Department. Mr. Castle will work under the direction of Ms. Karen Chapman, Planning and Development Director on planning, zoning, housing, economic development, and other planning projects.

Proposed New Hire: Joseph Boyle, Principal Planner, Planning and Development

The Executive Director recommends the hiring of Mr. Joseph Boyle as a full-time Principal Planner with an annual salary of \$57,997, funding allowing in the Planning and Development Department. Mr. Boyle will work under the direction of Ms. Karen Chapman, Planning and Development Director on planning, zoning, housing, economic development, and other single- and multi-purpose planning projects.

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission approves of the hiring of Joseph Boyle as presented above.

Having no objections, P. Cunningham moved to accept the resolution above with the addition of the hiring of Cory Castle as well. Motion was seconded.

Roll Call Vote Followed:

A. Pease- yes
A. Reid- yes
K. Munroe- yes
K. Nartowicz- yes
L. Shifrin- yes
P. Cunningham- yes
R. Ward- yes
R. Hoyt- yes
S. Donahue- yes
T. Toth- yes

Proposed Promotions: Sheri Bean, Principal Planner to Senior Planner

Ms. Sheri Bean serves as a Principal Planner in the Transportation Department with the MRPC. The Executive Director recommends the promotion of Ms. Sheri Bean from her current position

of Principal Planner to the new position of Senior Planner at an annual salary of \$86,500, funding allowing. This promotion is warranted as Ms. Bean is exceeding all the requirements of the Principal Planner position and has exhibited initiative in identifying and creating new planning projects and related services to be provided to the region's communities, identifies and pursues new funding opportunities to fund operations, and leads staff in multidisciplinary projects. Ms. Bean will continue to work under the direction of Mr. Brad Harris, Transportation Projects Director on transportation, single- and multi-purpose planning projects.

REOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission approves of the promotion of Sheri Bean as presented, above.

Having no objection, P. Cunningham moved to accept the resolution as presented. Motion was seconded.

Roll Call Vote Followed:

A. Pease- yes
A. Reid- yes
K. Munroe- yes
K. Nartowicz- yes
L. Shifrin- yes
P. Cunningham- yes
R. Ward- yes
R. Hoyt- yes
S. Donahue- yes
T. Toth- yes

Proposed Promotion: Brian Doherty, Principal Planner to Senior Planner

Mr. Brian Doherty serves as a Principal Planner in the Transportation Department with the MRPC. The Executive Director recommends the promotion of Ms. Brian Doherty from his current position of Principal Planner to the new position of Senior Planner at an annual salary of \$86,500, funding allowing. This promotion is warranted as Mr. Doherty is exceeding all the requirements of the Principal Planner position and has exhibited initiative in pursuing and obtaining a Certificate from the American Planning Association (APA, American Institute of Certified Planners [AICP]), identifying and creating new planning projects and related services to be provided to the region's communities, identifies and pursues new funding opportunities to fund operations, and leads staff in multidisciplinary projects. Mr. Doherty will continue to work under the direction of Mr. Brad Harris, Transportation Projects Director on transportation, single- and multi-purpose planning projects.

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission approves of the promotion of Brian Doherty as presented, above.

Having no objection, P. Cunningham moved to accept the resolution as presented. Motion was seconded.

Roll Call Vote Followed:

A. Pease- yes
A. Reid- yes
K. Munroe- yes
K. Nartowicz- yes
L. Shifrin- yes
P. Cunningham- yes
R. Ward- yes
R. Hoyt- yes
S. Donahue- yes
T. Toth- yes

Proposed Promotion: Holly Ford, Administrative Manager to Administrative and Human Resources Director

Ms. Holly Ford serves as the Administrative Manager in the MRPC's Department of Administration and Finance. Ms. Ford has expanded her base of knowledge in human resources and other areas. She has taken the initiative in growing beyond the job requirements of her current position by seeking and obtaining training in human resources, researching, analyzing, and updating employment policies, implementing employee morale programming, assisting fiscal staff, and designing training programming related to the Montachusett Enterprise Center, Inc. The Executive Director recommends the promotion of Ms. Holly Ford from her current position of Administrative Manager to the position of Administrative and Human Resources Director at an annual salary of \$79,900, funding allowing. This promotion is warranted as Ms. Ford is exceeding all the requirements of her current position.

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission approves of the promotion of Holly Ford as presented above.

Having no objection, P. Cunningham moved to accept the resolution as presented. Motion was seconded.

Roll Call Vote Followed:

A. Pease- yes
A. Reid- yes
K. Munroe- yes
K. Nartowicz- yes
L. Shifrin- yes
P. Cunningham- yes
R. Ward- yes
R. Hoyt- yes
S. Donahue- yes
T. Toth- yes

6.2 Hiring of Grant Writer

REPORT

In FY23 MRPC contracted with Dexterity Management to prepare grant proposals on behalf of the MRPC and its member communities. The Executive Director completed a procurement process in accordance with the G.L. of MA, c. 30B, Massachusetts Procurement Statute. Dexterity Management submitted the most responsible proposal. The Executive Director recommends the engagement of Dexterity Management to assist planning staff with the preparation of grant proposals in accordance with the fee proposal submitted by Dexterity Management.

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission hereby approves the Executive Directors recommendation to engage Dexterity Management as a consultant to complete certain grant writing services, as directed in order to assist the MRPC and its communities, throughout FY24 (through June 30, 2024) utilizing no more than \$25,000 from the MRPC's Massachusetts Municipal Depository Trust (MMDT) account, an amount not to exceed \$25,000 from municipal assessments earned by the MRPC from its member communities, and other grant funds as may be eligible and available throughout this fiscal year.

Having no objection, S. Donahue moved to accept the resolution as presented. Motion was seconded.

Roll Call Vote Followed:

A. Reid- yes
K. Munroe- yes
K. Nartowicz- yes
L. Shifrin- yes
P. Cunningham- yes
R. Ward- yes
S. Donahue- yes
T. Toth- yes

6.3 Adoption of Payment Policy

REPORT

The Executive Director recommends the adoption of the following policy:

“From this date forward entities engaging the MRPC for planning and related services shall compensate the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission no more than monthly and no less than quarterly.”

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commissioners hereby adopt the policy as presented above.

Having no objection, P. Cunningham moved to accept the resolution as presented. Motion was seconded.

Roll Call Vote Followed:

A. Reid- yes
K. Munroe- yes
K. Nartowicz- yes
L. Shifrin- yes
P. Cunningham- yes
R. Ward- yes
S. Donahue- yes
T. Toth- yes

6.4 Other Administrative Matters

No other administrative matters were presented.

7. Department Updates

MRPC is moving toward an online mapping tool for department updates. This information will be rolled out as early as October and will replace the quarterly Contract Status Report system. Commissioners are welcome to contact staff to obtain contract updates at any time.

7.1 Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

7.2 Planning & Development

Karen announced that we now have an Americorp member working with us who will be working on digital equity. Her name is Chloe Zearfoss. She will be with us through the end of July.

7.3 Transit & Transportation

8. New Business

This time is reserved for topics that the chair did not reasonably anticipate would be discussed.

G. Kahale made the announcement that at the beginning of this week, MART has reduced the fare of the fixed bus routes from \$1.25 to \$1.00. Additionally, students under the age of 18 ride free on the fixed bus routes.

P. Cunningham shared that Groton is currently dealing with PFAS contamination in the High School. DEP is requiring the town to clean this up but it is going to be a huge issue going forward in terms of contamination of municipal well sites and private wells. We all need to be aware of any resources that are available to assist member communities in dealing with this.

K. Munroe followed up with the lead cabling that was left behind in Hubbardston. The only response received was from AT&T. They confirmed the lead cable is in Hubbardston, they said it is not dangerous and would not give the location of where their lead cable is located.

9. Adjournment - The date of the next MRPC meeting – October 5, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

This meeting will be recorded by the GoToMeeting app and will be made available for viewing at <https://www.youtube.com/user/MontachusettRegion/videos>.

This notice is subject to change with reasonable notice provided to all.

Having no objection, K. Munroe motioned to adjourn the meeting. Motion was seconded.

Roll Call Vote Followed:

A. Reid- yes
K. Munroe- yes
K. Nartowicz- yes
L. Shifrin- yes
P. Cunningham- yes
R. Ward- yes
S. Donahue- yes
T. Toth- yes

Meeting Attendance					
<u>Name</u>	<u>M/A</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Appointment Date</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Janssens, Leo	A	Ashburnham	7.2021		X
Hoyt, Roger	M	Ashburnham	7.2011	X	
Leab, Doug	A	Ashby	7.2023		X
Pease, Alan	M	Ashby	7.2001	X	
Bialecki, Rebecca	A	Athol	7.2020.		X
Doherty, Jacqueline	M	Athol	7.2020.		X
Copeland, Shaun	A	Ayer	7.2020.		X
Tillotson, Geoffrey	M	Ayer	7.2022		X
Vacant	A	Clinton			X
Duffy, Phil	M	Clinton	12.2011		X
Angus, Neil	N/V	DREZ	7.2023		X
Bohart, Mary Jo	A	Fitchburg	7.2021		X
Butland, Alyne	M	Fitchburg	7.2020.		X
DeRoy, Jessica	A	Gardner	7.2021		X
Swartz, Robert	M	Gardner	7.2019		X
Cunningham, Peter	M	Groton	7.2022	X	

Burke, Russell	A	Groton	7.2016		X
Minar, Kara	A	Harvard	7.2021		X
Donahue, Stacia	M	Harvard	7.2018	X	
Kresge, Mark	A	Hubbardston	7.2023		X
Munroe, Kristofer	M	Hubbardston	2.2023	X	
Dolan, Kelly	A	Lancaster	7.2023		X
Streeter, Frank	M	Lancaster	7.2023		X
Vacant	A	Leominster			X
Valliere, Dean	M	Leominster	7.2019		X
Vacant	A	Lunenburg	7.2020.		X
Reid, Amanda	M	Lunenburg	7.2022	X	
Ermini, Annette	A	Petersham	7.2022		X
Vacant	M	Petersham			X
Telepciak, John	M	Phillipston	10.2001		X
Jackson, Melanie	A	Phillipston	7.2022		X
Barclay, James	A	Royalston	7.2017		X
Nartowicz, Kyle	M	Royalston	7.2015	X	
Oelfke, Bill	A	Shirley	7.2020.		X
Yocum, Barbara	M	Shirley	8.2017		X
Newman, Kristen	A	Sterling	7.2023		X
Page, Patty	M	Sterling	7.2019		X
Toth, Timothy	A	Templeton	7.2023	X	
Rich, Dennis	M	Templeton	7.2017		X
Sexton-Diranian, Charles	A	Townsend	7.2022		X

Shifrin, Laura	M	Townsend	7.2019	XX	
Vacant	A	Westminster			
Buckman, Gregg	M	Westminster	7.2021		X
Ward, Rick	A	Winchendon	7.2019	X	
Corbosiero, Guy	M	Winchendon	7.2011		X

Staff: G. Eaton, H. Ford, C. McNamara, K. Chapman, B. Harris, J. Stanton

DOCUMENTS/EXHIBITS DISTRIBUTED AT THE MEETING:

August 3, 2023 MRPC Meeting Minutes
 September 7, 2023 MRPC Meeting Agenda
 September 7, 2023 MRPC Meeting Handout
 Current Grant Opportunities Spreadsheet
 MRPC Cash Schedule August 2023
 Dexterity MRPC Cost Proposal
 FY24 Budget
 FY24 Salaries
 2023 Zero Waste Presentation
 MASSTOSS Presentation