

***Minutes of the Meeting of the***  
**MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MRPC)**  
**Doyle Center**  
**464 Abbott Avenue**  
**Leominster, MA 01453**



**THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 2019**  
**7:00 PM**

**1. Open Meeting, Introductions and Announcements**

G. Corbosiero called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**2. Approval of February 7, 2019 MRPC Minutes**

L. Shifrin moved that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission approve the February 7, 2019 MRPC minutes as distributed. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

**3. Treasurer's Report**

**3.1 Cash Schedule – February 2019**

A. Pease read the February 1 through February 28, 2019 Cash Schedule. Opening Balance \$440,337.22; Total receipts \$97,225.57; Total Cash on hand before this warrant \$537,562.79; Less: Amount of this warrant \$106,844.34; Balance after this warrant \$430,718.45. B. Yocum moved that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission approve the February 2019 Cash schedule as read subject audit and to be place on file. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

**4. Administrative Matters**

**4.1 Notice of MEPA Consultation Session - Whites Mill Pond Dam Removal and Stream Restoration – Winchendon**

G. Corbosiero stated that a meeting was held yesterday regarding the removal of Whites Pond Dam in Winchendon. The dam is fairly good sized and is 150 years old. It is a safety hazard. MEPA went through the process of how they would remove the dam and restore the area. The historic building will remain at the site and it was his understanding that the building is currently empty, but has been purchased and will be utilized in the future.

**4.2 Administration of Existing Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Revolving Loan Funds (RLF) for Future Brownfield Assessments Leading to Site Cleanup Loans –**

J. Hume explained that in 2001 MRPC received a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency for a Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund. Those monies were loaned to a company in Clinton. The property was decontaminated and the project was successful. The funds that were loaned to the company are being paid back to MRPC. To date, a little over \$100,000 has been paid back. With those funds, according

to the EPA close-out Agreement, we can re-loan for another brownfields clean up and/or we can utilize those funds for environmental site assessments. The funds can be used as either grants that would not have to be paid back to MRPC or loans that would have to be paid back to MRPC. We will be putting together some guidelines on what and how MRPC will utilize the monies based on the options explained above.

#### **4.3 Meeting of Commissioners Requested at 7:00 PM on Thursday, March 28, 2019 for FY18 Audit Presentation – *Approval Required***

L. Parmenter stated that Roland Lambalot, CPA is working on the FY18 audit. The audit needs to be submitted to MASSDOT by March 31, 2018. The audit must be presented and approved by the MRPC before that date.

M. Cruz moved that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission hold a special meeting on March 28, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. for the fiscal year 18 audit presentation. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

#### **4.4 Fiscal Year 2020 MRPC Budget**

Presentation was postponed.

### **5. Status Reports**

#### **5.1 Geographic Information Systems (GIS)**

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

We are working on updating a number of transportation-related layers as well as creating/updating WebApps related to these layers. It is anticipated that this project will be completed in March.

##### **COMMUNITY-RELATED**

Shirley Cemetery Mapping – We have received the database regarding plots and interments and are working with the Town to tweak the database for GIS conversion. The end results will be internal and public MRMapper applications for the two cemeteries. The MRMapper applications will allow users to search for interments and print maps showing plots. Additionally, the internal version will allow for editing/updates, as well as increased search functions, by the Town.

Royalston Assessor Mapping – We are working on updating the parcel data and maps for the Town of Royalston and are waiting for some final information from the Town before we can complete the project. Once complete the Town's MRMapper sites will be updated accordingly.

Lunenburg & Townsend Truck Exclusion Mapping – We have completed a draft map identifying proposed truck exclusions and alternative routes for these two communities. The map will be reviewed by the communities and additional mapping may be necessary based on feedback. We expect this project to be complete in March.

Westminster Proposed Zoning Change – We have completed before and after maps regarding a proposed zoning change to the Industrial District. This project is complete.

##### **COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING**

2020 Census Participant Statistical Areas Program (PSAP) – We are in the beginning phases of reviewing and modifying the proposed changes to the census boundaries (tracts and block groups). The Census Bureau has proposed changes to the census geographies. We will make

maps showing the current and proposed census geographies in order to internally review the proposed changes. Once we internally agree upon the changes, we will make a public comment app so that stakeholders can review the proposed changes and propose any changes of their own. Once the proposed changes for our region have been finalized, we will send them to our Primary Participating Officials who will send them to the Census Bureau. This phase of the project will be completed by the beginning of May. Our proposed changes will be reviewed by the Census Bureau in July 2019 and they will send out their finalized data for verification in January 2020 at which point we will have to approve their finalized data or give justification for not approving it.

DLTA Lunenburg Business Brochure – We met with the Town Manager, the Land-Use Director, the Conservation Administrator, and head of the Lunenburg Business Association to go over their comments and recommendations. We made the desired edits and sent it out for review again at which point it was approved. We sent them a digital version which they've posted on their website. They will also be procuring quotes for the printing cost. We have requested some copies of the final printed brochure for the office. This project has been completed.

#### **TRANSPORTATION-RELATED**

Trail Guide Update – We finalized all the trail data for our 22 communities. We updated the community trail maps on our website as well as the Regional Trail Inventory MRMapper app. This phase of the project has been completed. The next phase includes preparing two regional maps for the Regional Trail Brochure. This phase of the project is expected to be completed by the end of Spring 2019.

Working Towards the Future 2020 Comment Apps – We have created two different apps for use in obtaining public input regarding the Regional Transportation Plan Update. One app allows users to view and provide comment on the current Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) projects. The other allows users to view a variety of transportation-related data sets and provide feedback regarding these data sets. The comment period for these apps will be open for quite some time monitoring will continue throughout the process.

#### **TRANSIT-RELATED**

MART Non-Rider Opinion Report – We have written the text of the report and sent it to our Transit department for review. We have to finish formatting the report and inserting the appendices. We are also working on creating a flow map showing where respondents live and where they want to go. This project is expected to be completed in March.

MART Fitchburg/Leominster System Update – We updated the maps of the Fitchburg/Leominster bus system so that there is consistency between all insets on all maps. We also created a map showing the ADA buffer and streets in Sterling. This project is complete.

## **5.2 Planning and Development**

### *Comprehensive Planning Division*

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

A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) meeting was held on February 21, 2019 at 5 p.m. at MRPC offices. Katherine Lacy, Senior Project Manager with Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP) presented about Housing and Demographic Trends in North Central Massachusetts and provided an about on the Statewide Inclusionary Housing Survey. MRPC is also updating the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy document and Sean O'Donnell (MRPC Staff) provided a brief overview of the status of the update and some key demographics.

As part of this contract, MRPC provides assistance to communities seeking grant funds to improve economic vitality. MRPC staff is working to put an application together for the Town of Shirley for Housing Rehabilitation and Home Heating Fuel Assistance. Applications are due on or before March 8, 2019.

### **5.2.1 Cash Match to EDA Planning Grant – *Approval Required***

J. Hume explained that MRPC has been informed that the Executive Director will soon be receiving an invitation from the federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) to submit its EDA Capacity Building grant proposal to the EDA-Philadelphia Office. A \$17,500 cash match is required.

A. Pease moved that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission will authorize up to \$17,500 in cash to match a \$70,000 Economic Development Administration Planning Assistance grant for the period beginning April 1, 2019 and ending March 31, 2020, enabling the MRPC to provide economic development and administrative support to:

1. Communities in the Montachusett Region
2. Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)
3. Montachusett Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (MRCEDS) Committee
4. Montachusett Region Brownfields Reuse Initiative (MRBRI) Steering Committee
5. Montachusett Enterprise Center, Inc. (MEC)
6. Montachusett Economic Development District (MEDD) Board of Directors

*The purpose of this grant is to enable the MRPC to implement regional economic development strategies, provide economic development technical assistance to municipalities and implement the Montachusett Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). An in-kind match in the amount of at least \$52,500 will also be gained through District Local Technical Assistance Projects that involve economic development.*

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

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

All funds for Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments have been expended. MRPC applied to EPA for additional Brownfields Environmental Site Assessment funding. The grant application was submitted to EPA on January 31, 2019. EPA expects to announce the grant awards in late Spring 2019.

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

MRPC has an executed contract with the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). This is the 12<sup>th</sup> year of this State-funded initiative. MRPC issued a Request for Service Delivery (RSD) in January that was forwarded to Mayors/Boards of Selectmen, Town Administrators/Managers and Planning Boards/Departments with a proposal due date of March 4, 2019 for the first round and April 2<sup>nd</sup> for the second round. Awards will be made at the Planning Commission's meeting held on March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

## **5.2.2 District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Projects Round 1 – *Approval Required***

### **Reviews and Awards for Services: District Local Technical Assistance**

J. Hume stated in response to a first solicitation, on or before March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019 a total of thirteen (13) proposals were received for use of District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) resources to provide a variety of services. The proposals received are as follows:

1. Ashburnham: Housing Production Plan.
2. Clinton: Assist the Town of Clinton with designation as a Green Community.
3. Harvard: Permitting Guidebook.
4. Townsend: Assist to provide the municipality with regional data to update the 2015 Housing Production Plan and Master Plan.
5. Athol: Historic and Cultural Resources Master Plan Chapter update.
6. Athol: Urban Renewal Planning Assistance.
7. Hubbardston: Historical and Cultural Resources Master Plan Chapter.
8. Hubbardston: Services and Facilities Master Plan Chapter.
9. Sterling: Housing Production Plan update.
10. Sterling: Circulation/Transportation Master Plan Chapter.
11. Groton: Housing Production Plan.
12. Ashby, Townsend, and Pepperell: Regional Dispatch Feasibility Study.
13. Lunenburg: ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan.

After much discussion, Phil Duffy moved that due to the numerous proposals received from the first DLTA solicitation, that communities that submitted two applications would be required to prioritize one proposal. The prioritized project would be awarded if determined eligible by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The second proposal which was not prioritized would automatically be included in the second round. However, due to limitations on the remaining funds, communities that did not have an award and/or did not submit a proposal during round 1 will be given priority over communities that did have an award during round 1.

Question was asked if Ashby, Townsend and Pepperell Regional Dispatch Project was considered two proposals from Townsend.

It was decided that above mentioned project is not considered as two proposals from Townsend.

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

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

MRPC continues to use grant funds from the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) to assist the Towns of Hubbardston, and Templeton to become Green Communities and to assist with administration of existing Green Communities for Ashby, Athol, Harvard, Fitchburg, Lunenburg, Shirley, Townsend and Westminster. MRPC staff is assisting Ashby, Fitchburg, and Harvard to put together Green Community Competitive Grants due in March for up to \$250,000.

## ***Community Development Division***

### **Community Development Block Grant Programming**

#### **Federal Fiscal Year 2017 (FFY17) Shirley CDBG Program**

General Program Administration

Housing Rehabilitation (HR) Program

The status of this program is as follows:

- ✓ 19 applications for HR assistance have been received
- ✓ Eight applications have been approved
- ✓ Seven applications are incomplete; the Executive Assistant has reached out to all seven households again to follow up.
- ✓ Two clients withdrew their applications
- ✓ Two applications were denied as the household income exceeded the CDBG National Objective of providing a benefit to low- and moderate-income (LMI) persons
- ✓ Five HR projects have been completed

Home Heating Fuel Assistance (HHFA) Program

The status of this program is as follows:

- ✓ 25 applications for HHFA have been received
- ✓ 20 have been approved
- ✓ Three are pending approval
- ✓ One application was denied as the household heats with natural gas (not a qualifying heat source)
- ✓ 15 homes have received a portion of or all of their fuel assistance benefit as their LIHEAP benefits must be exhausted prior to the delivery of CDBG-funded fuel

#### **Development of Federal Fiscal Year 2019 (FFY19) Shirley CDBG Proposal**

The grant proposal is being prepared. The new due date is March 8, 2019.

#### **Montachusett Enterprise Center, Inc.**

Nothing new to report this month.

### 5.3 Transit

#### AYER PARKING FACILITY

G. Kahale indicated staff is currently working with the Contractor and Attorneys on this project.

#### ATHOL / ORANGE FIXED BUS ROUTE

G. Kahale mentioned that ridership on this fixed route bus route reached 132 riders in one day last week.

### 5.4 Transportation

#### MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE

Progress on the Montachusett Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) update can be seen on our RTP website: [www.mrpc.org/montachusett\\_2020\\_rtp](http://www.mrpc.org/montachusett_2020_rtp).

The RTP comment applications remain available online at the above link. Individuals can review current data and information related to the RTP and provide comments directly on the site. The comment apps include, Bridge Conditions, Pavement Conditions, Trails, Safety, Title VI and Environmental Justice Populations and others. In addition, the app labeled as Short-Range Projects contains information from the FFY 2019-2023 TIP.

Staff has initiated a series of public workshops/meetings scheduled around the region as a means to present information on the RTP as it progresses and to solicit public feedback. Workshops have been held at the MART Facility, Winchendon, Harvard, Ayer and Phillipston.

#### FFY 2020-2023 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)

The Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) met on February 16<sup>th</sup> where information was presented on four TIP Target eligible projects:

Project ID	Community	Project Description	Est Total Cost
604499	Leominster	LEOMINSTER- Reconstruction/ Rehabilitation on Route 12 (Central Street), Including Rehabilitation of L-08-022	\$ 8,350,150
608888	Gardner	GARDNER- Reclamation and Related Work on Pearson Boulevard	\$864,519
608793	Hubbardston	HUBBARDSTON- Highway Reconstruction of Route 68 (Main Street), from 1,000 Ft North of Williamsville Road to Elm Street	\$2,230,070
608424	Templeton	TEMPLETON- Reconstruction of Route 68, From King Phillip Trail (Route 202) North to The Phillipston Town Line (2.65 Miles)	\$5,575,826

Staff also participated in TIP Readiness Day with MassDOT on February 12<sup>th</sup>. TIP project status was reviewed to ensure all parties were operating on the same platform. In addition, at a joint MARPA/MassDOT meeting at the end of January, target figures were received for the FFY 2020-2024 TIP for our region. These targets are comparable to last years and are as follows:

	Total Federal Aid
<b>FFY 2020</b>	<b>\$10,636,366</b>
<b>FFY 2021</b>	<b>\$10,851,652</b>

<b>FFY 2022</b>	<b>\$11,072,618</b>
<b>FFY 2023</b>	<b>\$11,314,453</b>
<b>FFY 2024</b>	<b>\$11,462,749</b>

#### **FFY 2019 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP)**

The MPO reviewed a request to adjust the budgets of six UPWP tasks in order to budget up to \$45,000 for an outside consultant to assist us with the Local ADA Transition Plan task. The consultant would help to collect, analyze and prepare the Public Right of Way (PROW) section for two to three community's ADA Transition Plan. The MPO approved the adjustment and a formal request was submitted to MassDOT. Once final approval is received, a RFQ will be sent out for bids.

#### **PERFORMANCE BASED PLANNING AGREEMENT REVIEW**

The MPO reviewed a draft Performance based Regional Planning Agreement that covers MPOs, RTAs and state agencies on the responsibilities, development, monitoring, and reporting of performance measures. The agreement spells out how performance measures are developed, adopted and reported on the state level as well as the MPO level. It covers the sharing of data as well as dispute resolution. The agreement will be voted on at the March 20<sup>th</sup> MPO meeting.

- **Next MJTC Meeting – March 13, 2019 at 6:30 PM at MRPC Offices**
- **Next MPO Meeting – March 20, 2019 at 1:00 PM at MRPC Offices**

#### **6. New Business**

There was no new business for discussion.

#### **7. Executive Session**

G. Corbosiero, in open session, stated that he would take a roll call vote to enter into Executive Session for Purpose 5. to investigate charges of criminal misconduct or to consider the filing of criminal complaints. He indicated that MRPC would reconvene in open session at the end of the session for adjournment.

Roll call vote to enter into Executive Session for Purpose 5.

Stacia Donahue	Yes
Laura Shifrin	Yes
Maribel Cruz	Yes
Alan Pease	Yes
Phil Duffy	Yes
Roger Hoyt	Yes
Duane Truehart	Yes
Barbara Yocum	Yes
Guy Corbosiero	Yes

#### **8. Adjournment**

P. Duffy moved to adjourn the regular session of the MRPC at 9:01 p.m. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.



Meeting Attendance					
Name	M/A	Representing	Appointment Date	PRESENT	ABSENT
Meissner, Rosemarie	A	Ashburnham	3.2019		X
Hoyt, Roger	M	Ashburnham	7.2011	X	
Pease, Alan	M	Ashby	7.2001	X	
Stacy, Wayne	A	Ashby	7.2005		X
Truehart, Duane	M	Athol	7.2016	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
Caron, Paula	M	Fitchburg	7.2002		X
Vacant	A	Fitchburg			X
Gross, Allen	M	Gardner	2.2005		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
Vacant	M	Leominster			X
Vacant	A	Leominster			X
Cole, Tanner	M	Lunenburg	7.2018		X
Adams, Kathryn	A	Lunenburg	7.2018		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
Widing, Sarah	A	Shirley	7.2015		X
Yocum, Barbara	M	Shirley	8.2017	X	
Pineo, Michael	M	Sterling	7.2014		X
Kilcoyne, John	A	Sterling	7.2014		X
Rich, Dennis	M	Templeton	7.2017		X
Terenzini, Carter	A	Templeton	9.2016		X
Shifrin, Laura	M	Townsend	7.2018	X	
King, Cindy	A	Townsend	7.2016		X
Weist, Linda	M	Westminster	7.2017		X
Vacant	A	Westminster			X
Corbosiero, Guy	M	Winchendon	7.2011	X	

Barbaro, Michael	A	Winchendon	3.2019		X
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**STAFF PRESENT:** Linda Parmenter, Linda Quinlivan, Brad Harris, John Hume, Jason Stanton, George Kahale

**GUESTS PRESENT:** Chris Ryan, Harvard; Fran Stanley, Groton

EXHIBITS/DOCUMENTS PRESENTED AT MEETING

March 2019 MRPC Handout  
February 7, 2019 MRPC Minutes  
February 2019 Cash Schedule  
Grant Opportunities Spreadsheet  
Twin City Rail Trail Public Hearing Notice  
2020 Regional Transportation Plan Notice  
Performance Based Planning and Programming Agreement V2  
FFY2020 – 2024 TEC Scores and Comparisons  
MassDOT Transportation Innovation Conference Postcard  
Proposed UPWP Adjustment