

**MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 28, 2014**

1. INTRODUCTIONS

V. Koivumaki called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

A list of those members present and absent can be found on the last page of this document.

1.1 Moment of Silence In Memory Of Former MRPC Secretary, John White

V. Koivumaki stated that Mr. White had been a loyal attendee and officer of the MRPC as well as a public servant in his home town of Winchendon for all of his life.

A moment of silence was held in remembrance.

2. APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 26, 2013 MEETING MINUTES

G. Corbosiero made a motion to approve the minutes of November 26, 2013 as printed. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

3. TREASURER'S REPORT

A. Pease read the January 2014 cash schedule. Balance after last warrant \$119,967.30; Total Receipts this month \$55,256.61; Total cash on hand before this warrant \$175,223.73; Less: amount of this warrant \$143,002.73; balance after this warrant \$24,854.70.

G. Corbosiero moved to accept the January cash schedule as read subject to audit and to be placed on file. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

4. PRESENTATION BY AUDITOR ROLAND LAMBALOT - FY13 AUDIT

R. Lambalot presented the FY2013 MRPC Audit to the Planning Commission. Mr. Lambalot indicated that there were no findings and that the MRPC had a good audit. He went on to discuss different aspects of the audit report with the Commissioners, including but not limited to the direct and indirect cost rates, GASB45 funding and the commitment of funds, as well as other items listed in the audit report.

Mr. Lambalot indicated that the MRPC's indirect cost rate is high, which led to a discussion on how to lower this cost.

A. Pease made a motion to accept the FY2014 Audit into record. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

5.1 FY2014 Budget Update and Possible Salary Adjustments/Resolution

G. Eaton indicated that due to budgetary concerns, the MRPC elected to not include Step Raises last January in order to stabilize the financial situation at the MRPC.

This year, G. Eaton would like to include salary increments (subject to positive employee reviews) to this year's budget and have brought the salary scale to the Commission for their review and approval.

P. Caron asked if this resolution was intended to hire the new employee and also to approve step increases.

It was the consensus of the Commission to break the resolution into two.

P. Caron indicated she would not approve salary increments and needs more information. She indicated that we had discussed at prior meetings regarding pay scale step increases and a Cost of Living increase. There is nothing on the pay scale that indicates either. She stated that there have previously been issues with the scale due to employees being at the end of their pay steps. Measures should be taken in order not to simply add steps to the end of pay scale to continue to raise salaries. We should address the issue and resolve this issue before anymore pay scale steps are added to grades to simply accommodate salary increases.

C. Jones asked if this pay scale was a salary increase and a COLA or simply an increase.

G. Eaton stated that this is simply a 2.5% salary increase, not including a COLA adjustment based on a study done for MRPC on market analysis several years prior.

P. Caron indicated that you need to differentiate between a step increase and a merit increase. To categorize everyone as the same, as an overall professional increase, how do you avoid simply adding on steps again.

G. Eaton stated that we have not changed the existing system.

P. Caron stated that this will be a problem because you need address people in the top end of their Grades and those in the center steps.

G. Eaton indicated we could handle this issue this evening or perhaps next month. As an organization we never differentiated between a step and COLA increase. The percentage increase was always the cleanest way to give staff their increases.

P. Caron is not opposed to an increase, but she would like to bring some transparency to it, and asked if steps were added to the pay scale distributed this evening.

G. Eaton indicated that 3 steps were added to accommodate all of the employees.

P. Caron stated that this is the issue. You are not supposed to add steps to the pay scale. There needs to be a policy in place on how to deal with employees who reach their maximum pay

allotted in their Grade, whether or not it is a bonus or a COLA increase, etc. If you keep adding there is no end to the earning capacity for employees.

V. Koivumaki indicated that an employee should hit the end of the steps in the particular grade for their position, and then a difference measure of increase should be put in place in order to accommodate merit and/or COLA increases for those who are at the end of their grade level, to effectively compensate staff for work completed.

G. Eaton indicated that we do not have a COLA policy, or offer a COLA increase. The grade/step scale is based on a Market Analysis as well as the contributing factors year to year.

V. Koivumaki asked where everyone is on the pay scale. Are there people who are at the higher steps that had to be accommodated by expanding the pay scale?

G. Eaton indicated that we did have one employee, Brad Harris, at the end of his pay grade.

G. Eaton indicated that this scale, up to step 9, is identical to the pay scale and information given to us by Sandy Stapczynski during her market analysis study in 2011.

L. Parmenter indicated this salary scale system has been in place since the 1980s.

V. Koivumaki indicated that the issue with this scale is that there is need for a maximum amount paid per position, and then the only increases allotted after that point are COLA increases.

G. Eaton stated that if that is the wish of the Commission, that it is his duty to prepare information for the board and bring the information back for approval.

B. Johnson indicated that we, as an agency cannot offer Cost of Living adjustments because they are prohibited by MassDOT. In order to offer something like a COLA it needs to be called something else. When other RPA's offer a salary increase relating to COLA, they wrap it into another salary increase, but it cannot be called a COLA.

C. Jones indicated that the Commission is limited its ability to assist in this issue. What should be done is every several years is to re-adjust the pay scale through outsourced market analysis and adjust it accordingly.

P. Duffy indicated that the request presented will not be approved at this time. There is no objection to the magnitude of the increases at this time; we should bring it back next meeting including the increases however addressing the issue of what to do with employees at the end of their grade/steps.

G. Eaton indicated that a significant amount of staff time is allocated annually to the pursuit of known and new grants. Staff time used to seek out grant resources takes time away from the efficient and timely delivery of grant-funded projects and programs. An entry-level, grant writing position is hereby proposed to be created and hired by the Executive Director. Planning Commission authorization is requested.

P. Duffy moved that that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission authorizes the that the Executive Director seek applicants and engage a qualified person as a grant writer/entry level planner, for a salary not to exceed \$34,338 (Grade 1, Step 2 per the attached pay scale), for the purposes of bolstering revenue to the MRPC. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

P. Caron indicated that the salary amount should be removed from the motion in order to remain consistent with the work to be completed on the salary scales at this time.

Motion was resubmitted and passed with the removal of exact numbers, simply including the grade and steps.

5.2 Election of Treasurer to Fill Vacancy Left by James Meehan

G. Eaton explained that James Meehan, former Athol Member and MRPC Treasurer, has resigned from the Planning Commission. The MRPC needs to hold an election in his place in order to fill the vacant seats of the officers. Mr. Eaton indicated that this would be a half term position and another election will be held in June 2014 per the bylaws.

J. Bilotta nominated Alan Pease for the position of Treasurer. P. Duffy seconded the nomination and it was passed unanimously.

A. Pease nominated Joanna Bilotta to fill the now vacant position of Assistant Treasurer. G. Corbosiero seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

R. Hoyt nominated Guy Corbosiero for the now vacant At-Large Member position. J. Bilotta seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

For the record, the MRPC Officers are as follows:

Victor Koivumaki, Chairman

Paula Caron, Vice Chairman

Alan Pease, Treasurer

Joanna Bilotta, Assistant Treasurer

Chris Jones, Secretary

Guy Corbosiero, At-Large Member

John Telepciak, At-Large Member

5.3 Financing of First Receivership Home with Assistance from State Attorney General and Athol Home-Corps Grant Program (107 Stevens Street, Athol)

MRPC and MEC, Inc. have been working with local officials, the Attorney Generals' Worcester Office, and the Worcester Housing Court in order to seek approval of MEC, Inc. as a "receiver" of 107 Stevens Street. The approval of MEC as a receiver would enable it to rehabilitate the home with HomeCorps and private financing and auction this vacant, foreclosed home to a family in need, thus stabilizing the neighborhood. MEC would receive a fee for its work invested in the project.

5.4 Resolution For The Attendance Of MRPC Fiscal Staff At Annual GMS Conference, Baltimore, Maryland

The Executive Director requests permission to send Bobbi Jo Johnson, Fiscal Director and Stephanie Brow, Administrative Assistant to the Grants Management Systems (GMS) annual training conference from May 17-23, 2014 in Baltimore, Maryland. This conference will ensure that staff remains up to date on their abilities and use of the GMS System in order to further benefit the MRPC. Early registration deadline is April 23, 2014. Approval of this resolution will enable the MRPC to take advantage of early registration. We would like to arrange air travel arrangements as early as possible in order to minimize travel costs. The Executive Director respectfully requests authorization of two employees to attend this conference.

J. Bilotta moved that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission authorizes the attendance of Bobbi Jo Johnson, Fiscal Director and Stephanie Brow, Administrative Assistant at the annual GMS Conference and training session to be held in Baltimore, Maryland from Saturday May 17 through Friday May 23, 2014 at a total cost not to exceed \$5,000 (\$2,500 per employee) for registration, meals, travel and related and eligible costs. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

5.5 Executive Director's Announcements

1. MRPC staff spent a significant amount of time in January responding to MART staff request for payroll information for the positions of Executive Director and Fiscal Director.
2. It is with great disappointment that the Executive Director must inform the Planning Commissioners of the resignation of James Meehan from the MRPC and MEC, Inc. Board of Directors. Mr. Meehan served Athol, MRPC, and MEC, Inc. with great distinction for eight years. The Executive Director notes that but for Jim's comment that "You guys don't do (expletive deleted) for the small towns" prompted then-Executive Director Laila Michaud and all MRPC Department Heads to strengthen ties with Athol and similar small communities. Since that time MRPC has delivered additional services in the areas of land use/zoning, environmental, affordable housing planning and GIS services to communities well under 10,000 in population. The Planning Commission will seek to replace James Meehan as Treasurer at its next meeting to be held in February 2014.
3. MEC, Inc. has been appointed as the provisional "receiver" of 107 Stevens Street, Athol for the purpose of rehabilitating and selling this formerly foreclosed property, with the assistance of State Attorney General HomeCorps grant funds awarded to the Town of Athol in 2012. MRPC staff (Executive Director and Community Development Director) has expended a significant amount of time with a number of local officials in Athol to ensure

that the community's HomeCorps grant funds will be expended no later than June 30, 2014.

4. The Executive Director and Mr. Thomas Roufos, Intern conducted a job fair at Fitchburg State University in October 2013. At least 12 FSU students have been hired on a part-time basis to complete bus rider surveys for the Fitchburg-Leominster bus system (November, December and January) and the Gardner and G-Link system in February, March and April). Data collected will be used in the Transit Development Plans (TDP) for the region. In addition, student interns will assist with the completion of a "non-bus riders survey" in March 2014.
5. At this point in time there are a total of 18 temporary, seasonal and part-time student interns working for the MRPC from FSU. The total number of interns exceeds the total number of full-time employees (of which there are 16), by two. A core group of interns (Thomas Roufos, Stephanie Brundige, Daniel LaFond, Jessica Whitley, Taylor Duffy, and Josh Trahan) have been providing assistance with the following:
 - a. HUD – Wachusett Smart Growth Corridor Analysis
 - b. Grant application preparation – brownfields
 - c. GIS
 - d. Video and audio clips will be produced by the MRPC this spring with the assistance of a Film Studio Major, Dustin Bragga. Clips will be uploaded to the MRPC's website and Youtube. The purpose of the clips will be to provide FAQ information concerning the Commission, its programs and services in digestible, "sound bite" lengths.
 - e. Several of these interns are now working with Americorps Volunteers working for the Mount Grace Land Trust on projects in Athol.
6. Office Relocation
 - a. Lease negotiations – final lease terms being word processed by MART's Acting Administrator
 - b. Financing – document to be submitted on Wednesday, January 29th
 - c. Design – plans and specifications suitable for bidding delivered Monday, January 27, 2014
7. All outside audit tasks of FY13 were completed by Roland Lambalot, CPA prior to the end of December 2013. There are no findings. Bobbi Jo Johnson, Fiscal Director has set a goal to work toward the goal of seeing the Agency's audit completed no later than September 30, 2014, for FY14.
8. Budget Issues
 - a. An additional \$40,000 in funds in the DLTA program has been allocated to the MRPC for this program year (ending December 31, 2014).
 - b. The Executive Director prepared a proposal, which was funded, for \$23,000 for the completion of a Community Needs Assessment for the Town of Hubbardston. This project will be completed by the Comprehensive Planning and Community Development Departments in a team effort, supported by FSU interns in 2014.
 - c. The Comprehensive Planning staff prepared and submitted an Environmental Site Assessment grant to the US EPA on January 22, 2014 for a total of \$200,000 for the completion of phase one and phase two environmental site assessments.
 - d. The Community Development Department is in the process of preparing two, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) applications.
 - e. The GIS Department has branched out to provide the creation of "smart applications" or smart apps" for GIS-related purposes. Examples include trails for

recreational uses, public safety application for public safety officials in Athol related to managing vacant and abandoned buildings, and MEC real estate redevelopment/receivership management in Athol. Smart apps are being developed for the three, major tablet platforms including Droid (i.e. Samsung Galaxy-driven products), Microsoft Office (i.e. "Surface" table), and Apple (i.e. "Ipods").

9. The Executive Director is backing-up the Comprehensive Planning Department staff with attendance at meetings concerning the All Hazards Mitigation planning project.
10. Linda Parmenter, Administrative and Human Resources Director has been preparing boilerplate narrative and related updates to John Hume Planning and Development Director with the All Hazards Mitigation plan. Mr. Eaton and Ms. Parmenter are also poring over demographic data to be used in the All Hazards Plan along with demographic data used in the RTP (2011), TDP (2013), Wachusett Smart Growth Corridor materials (2013+) in order to finalize a "base data report" for the Montachusett Region. A final base data report will be published by the MRPC no later than June 30, 2014.

6. STATUS REPORTS

V. Koivumaki waived the reading of the status reports due to time constraints.

6.1 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING

6.1.1 FY11 CDBG Programs

Phillipston (lead community) with Royalston

This grant is in closeout.

Housing Rehabilitation Program. Fifteen rehab projects are complete, exceeding the activity goal of fourteen units. We are placing new applicants on the waiting list for future grant rounds. This project is complete.

Phillipston and Royalston Town Hall Accessibility Design.

Haynes, Lieneck & Smith completed full design plans, specifications and cost estimates for the approved design options. This project is complete.

Phillipston and Royalston Affordable Housing Plans.

DHCD approved both plans on December 30, 2013. This project is complete.

Townsend

One project is complete. A second project started. Work was suspended because the homeowner has asked for additional changes in the approved scope of work.

Clinton

Five cases (seven units) are complete; one case has some punch list items that are being addressed by the contractor. The program met the activity goal of seven units. Additional applicants have been placed on the town's waiting list

6.1.2 FY12 CDBG Program

Phillipston (lead community) with Royalston

We submitted a request to DHCD to extend this grant until June 30, 2014. DHCD approved the request on January 13.

We are preparing an amendment to use surplus grant funds to underwrite acquisition and rehab of one or more homes for affordable housing. This project will implement recommendations of the towns' recently completed affordable housing plans.

Housing Rehabilitation Program. Two rehab projects are complete. An additional project is nearly complete. We are placing new applicants on the waiting list. We advertised for additional contractors for this and related programs.

Infrastructure projects.

Blossom and Park Streets, Royalston. All work is complete.

Brooks Village Road, Phillipston. All work is complete.

6.1.3 FY14 CDBG Program

We are preparing two applications for five communities: Phillipston with Royalston (road reclamation and repaving, regional housing rehab, housing design); and Ashby, Ashburnham and Lancaster (regional housing rehab, road reclamation and repaving, ADA compliance). Applications are due February 14, 2014.

Distressed Property Identification and Revitalization (DPIR) Grant Program

The Attorney General's Office has revised the purpose of the grant. Grantees will now focus on bank REO residential properties only. The revised purpose of the program is to get REO properties re-occupied quickly. Department staff and interns have begun implementing the revised scope of work.

Receivership Projects

The Housing Court has granted MEC preliminary receivership status for 107 Stevens Street, Athol, so that MEC staff and consultant inspectors can inspect the property, determine the repair work necessary to rehabilitate the property, develop a project budget, and report back to the Court for permission to proceed with repairs.

6.1.5 FY14 Community Innovation Challenge (CIC) Grant Program

We are preparing an application to the FY14 CIC Program to underwrite the cost of MRPC hosting a regional housing services office for Phillipston, Royalston and Hubbardston. Application awards are expected in February 2014.

6.2 COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

6.2.1 Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA)

MRPC put together a grant application for \$400,000 in Federal grant funds from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for a Brownfields Site Assessment Grant on sites to be determined and approved by MRPC and the EPA. MRPC also put together an application for \$1,000,000 for a Brownfields Revolving Loan fund that could be utilized for brownfields cleanup in the Montachusett Region. The grant applications were due on Wednesday, January 22, 2014.

MRPC has also been working to update the Montachusett Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) document to be presented a CEDS meeting in February (day to be determined) and at the February MRPC Commission Meeting.

6.2.2 Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), promoting Low Impact Development (LID) in the Millers River Watershed

MRPC staff continues to work with Hubbardston on draft low impact development regulations. Work with Athol has been concluded – revisions were offered to the subdivision rules and regulations concerning low impact development and MRPC staff will attend a Public Hearing on February 3rd.

6.2.3 Hazard Mitigation Plan Update Project

MRPC Staff continues our work towards updating the Local Hazard Mitigation Plans for our 22 communities. At this time, MRPC Staff is beginning to initiate work on draft plans to be presented to communities for input/adoption in the spring and into early summer.

6.2.4 Federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Challenge Grant

Wachusett Corridor Smart Growth Analysis project (Fitchburg, Leominster, and Westminster). A steering committee meeting was held in December where staff presented on demographic and housing indicators (i.e. population growth, household size, family income, etc.). At that meeting, draft economic development goals, objectives, and recommendations. Another meeting will be scheduled in February where the open space and recreation element will be presented/discussed along with housing goals, objectives, and recommendations.

6.2.5 Fitchburg – ArtistLink

MRPC is assisting the City of Fitchburg on a portion of its ArtistLink Grant Project. The overall Project seeks to foster additional artist live/work space within Downtown Fitchburg, including the B.F. Brown School. MRPC's role is to provide assistance related to development of zoning reform to encourage artist space development and help determining the feasibility of artist space for vacant properties. There are no new actions to report.

6.2.6 District Local Technical Assistance Program

Reviews and Awards for Services: District Local Technical Assistance

In January 2014, a total of nine proposals were received for use of District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) resources to provide a variety of services.

Comprehensive Planning staff will be primarily responsible for the delivery of MRPC's DLTA services. The nine proposals and related communities are as follows:

1. Clinton: Utilization of the Economic Development Self- Assessment Tool (EDSAT), an instrument made available to communities by the Dukakis Center at Northeastern University.
2. Clinton: Downtown Housing Study.
3. Lunenburg: Review and Analysis of the Feasibility of Providing Regional Animal Control Services.
4. Lunenburg: Continuation of work on a Village District Bylaw.
5. Lancaster: Continuation of work on a Village District Bylaw.
6. Shirley: Continuation of work on an Overlay Bylaw for the Lancaster Road Priority Development Area.
7. Royalston: Village District Bylaw.

8. Winchendon: Economic Development Plan.
9. Athol: Housing Plan.

J. Bilotta moved that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) recommends that #1 through #9 of the above-named proposals and project requests for District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) be **conditionally** awarded based upon further communication/clarification with the applying communities and input, comments, and approval from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). All activities in some applications may not be awardable under the DLTA program: MRPC staff reserves the right to negotiate an awardable detailed scope of services.

Those requests conditionally awarded (#1 through #9) are subject to the conditions listed below.

1. The services to be delivered to the communities will be completed commencing no earlier than a fully executed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the subject (lead) community and the MRPC.
2. Services will be delivered to the subject community(ies) during the implementation of the District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) program year (2014).
3. The award of services from the MRPC is subject to the:
 - a. Funding available to the MRPC during the program year (2014);
 - b. Successful negotiation of a detailed scope of services, schedule for the completion of the tasks identified in the scope of services, and budget utilizing DLTA and other funds, if available and eligible for the aforementioned project;
 - c. Execution of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the MRPC and the community(ies); and,
 - d. The MRPC's receipt of a letter from the Chief Elected Official (CEO) of all of the affected communities indicating agreement to this proposal and willingness to participate in this analysis. (Communities may agree to participate in this analysis after the full execution of the MOU between the subject (lead) community and the MRPC but must agree to participate in order to receive the results of the report.)
4. Where and when possible the MRPC will deliver the tasks related to "analysis, preparation and presentation ... report(s) ..." as indicated above. The MRPC and the community requesting services will "outsource" consulting services only when absolutely deemed to be necessary by both the lead community and the MRPC.
5. This is an award of services from the MRPC to the applicable community(ies). This is not a cash award.
6. If at any time DHCD determines that the project is ineligible, the award of services will be null and void.
7. The municipality and all municipal departments shall provide MRPC with cooperation/access/assistance to public data applicable to the DLTA project including the provision of such materials. Related costs associated with this (data collection, photocopying, etc.) will be at the expense of the municipality(s).

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

6.3 GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

6.3.1 MRMapper & Mobile Apps

We have recently added Mobile Apps designed to improve efficiency in data collection and field work, allowing users to view, create and edit data on-the fly. All apps are custom designed to the users' field of work or area of interest and work on most Apple (iOS) and Android devices.

We have also recently upgraded our internet connection significantly to improve speed and efficiency.

We are continuously working on updates to these systems and adding additional applications and functionality to the site.

6.3.2 Central Mass Evacuation Plan – Phase 1B

This project has been completed. Phase 2 of the project will aid jurisdictions in practical use of the 'Tool Kit' developed in Phase 1B. This will be accomplished through the development and delivery of training workshops and exercises to assure that jurisdictions have the knowledge and capabilities to utilize this data during an actual event.

6.3.3 Hazard Mitigation Plan Five-Year Update Project

The MRPC has been working on Hazard Mitigation Plan Five-Year updates for all of the MRPC Communities, including Devens. The GIS Department will be working directly with the planners and local officials to update all relevant data for the project. All 23 Local Hazards meetings have been completed to date. In conjunction with the Central Mass Evacuation Plan, we are also currently working on updating Critical Facility data for the region. 18 of the 23 Critical Facility Data meetings have been completed (all Worcester County Communities) to date and the remainder (Middlesex County Communities) will be completed in the next few months. This project will be ongoing for the next several months.

6.3.4 Westminster Master Plan Update Mapping

The MRPC has been working on assisting the Town of Westminster with a series of maps that will be included in their Master Plan update. The mapping will be completed over the course of FY13 and FY14 and will include a total of 10 maps as well as GIS Technical Assistance & Set-Up for the Town Planners' office to be able to utilize the maps and data. Currently the Cell Tower Overlay, Infrastructure and Economic Development, Protected Lands, Road Status, Fisheries & Wildlife, Regional Context, Soils & Geologic Features, Water Resources, Existing Land Use and Historic & Cultural Resources maps have been completed. The remaining three maps will be completed in the next few months.

6.3.5 MART System Comprehensive Update

This project is approximately 90% complete.

6.3.6 Wachusett Corridor Planning Study

The HUD Challenge Grant project has been completed.

The Open Space/Recreation element of the Wachusett Smart Growth Corridor Analysis project has been completed. The build-out study has been completed in draft format and will be finalized by February. This project will be on going over the next year and a half.

6.3.7 Route 117 Corridor Profile

This project has been completed

6.3.8 MRPC Regional Trail Inventory Update

The MRPC has finalized the formal trail inventory along with all community maps. The next phase is to create a region-wide brochure with the finalized trail data for 2014. This phase project will continue through September 2014.

6.3.9 MART Fitchburg/Leominster Transit Development Plan (TDP) Update

The MRPC is currently working on the MART Fitchburg/Leominster TDP Update. This project involves mapping and data analysis as it relates to a variety of demographic factors. This project is completed.

6.3.10 Clinton Open Space Update

The MRPC is currently working on mapping updates to the Clinton Open Space Plan. Currently the Environmental Justice Populations, Zoning, Unique Features and Plant & Wildlife Habitat maps have been completed. A draft of the Open Space map has been completed and will require further edits. The Action Plan map will be completed after the Open Space map has been finalized. It is anticipated that this project will be completed in February.

6.3.11 Leominster Open Space Update

The MRPC is currently working on mapping updates to the Leominster Open Space Plan. Currently the Regional Context, Justice Populations, Soils & Geologic Features, Unique Features Map and Water Resources maps have been completed. The City is working with a consultant to complete an Open Space Inventory necessary for the Open Space Map. Once the MRPC has received this data the Open Space map will be completed. The Action Plan map is in draft and will be reviewed by the City of Leominster. It is anticipated that this project will be completed next month.

6.3.12 DLTA

Round 6 of this project has been completed.

6.4 TRANSIT

6.4.1 Wachusett Commuter Rail Station and Layover Facility

The construction work on the Wachusett Commuter Rail Station in Fitchburg and on the MBTA's Commuter Rail Layover Facility at the Westminster Business Park is underway. The construction phase has been awarded to S&R Construction Enterprises for \$22.9 million. HNTB consultant has completed the track and signal design to the 60% level which is the level to which the plans are turned over to Pan Am for construction. Substantial project completion is expected by December, 2014 with full completion in spring of 2015. Staff continues to work

with Pan Am Railways and the City of Fitchburg to transfer 5th Mass Turnpike property to MART.

6.4.2 Parking Expansion at N. Leominster Station

Mr. Kahale continues to assist MART and provide technical assistance on this construction project of N. Leominster parking garage structure facility for 360 parking spaces. Staff continues to attend the weekly construction progress and coordination meetings with consultant, engineers and contractor. The construction schedule has been revised by the general contractor for project completion to be achieved by January 2014.

6.4.3 Ayer Parking Facility

MART and MRPC staff had several meetings with the Administrator and Economic Development Director of Ayer. Currently MART has to procure an access between Main Street and the current Train Station in Ayer through private property. FTA officials indicated that MART has to resolve this access issues as soon as possible before the rest of the project can move forward. MART is discussing this matter with Ayer officials for a procurement of an access path, without any easement or any other condition. Mr. Kahale continues to assist MART, FTA and town of Ayer to move forward the construction of the proposed project of Ayer Commuter Rail Surface Parking Lot for 200 parking spaces at Ayer Rail Trail parking lot Location at Park Street. The State has awarded Ayer the Mass Works Infrastructure Program Grant in the Amount of \$266,667 to be used as matching funds to be combined with Town and MART funds to utilize the \$3.2 million federal grant.

6.4.4 Fitchburg Commuter Rail Line Improvements

This project is currently funded at \$169 million with in state and federal funds for the Small Starts Project and replacement of the Route 62 Bridge. In addition, MBTA allocated another \$42 million in ARRA Stimulus and EOHED Funding to accomplish the double tracking and the improvements to Littleton Station, as well as another \$10 million for replacing CPF 43 in Lunenburg. Work on the project is continues with the double tracking along the corridor getting underway this construction season and scheduled for completion in the summer of 2014.

6.5 TRANSPORTATION

6.5.1 Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MMPO) Meeting

The MPO met on Wednesday January 8, 2014. At that meeting, the MPO reviewed a series of assurances related to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 for sub-recipients of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding. These assurances indicate that the MPO is meeting all applicable requirements to the best of its ability. The presiding chair then signed off on these assurances after discussion and unanimous vote by the MPO. Since the MRPC is also a sub-recipient of FTA funding through our "3C" transportation planning contract and our Section 5307 FTA transit planning grant, the MRPC should also adhere to these assurances and sign off as appropriate. The FTA Assurances are summarized on a handout available at this meeting. In addition, the MJTC at its January 15, 2014 meeting reviewed the FTA assurances and recommended that the MRPC authorize the Executive Director to sign the assurances. Therefore, it is requested that the MRPC authorize its Executive Director to sign the FTA Assurances

G. Corbosiero moved that the MRPC has reviewed the FTA Assurances related to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and based upon this review and the recommendation of the MJTC agrees that the MRPC adheres to these assurances to the best of their ability. The MRPC also authorizes the Executive Director to sign these assurances on behalf of the Commission. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

6.5.2 FFY 2015-2018 Montachusett Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Development

The Montachusett MPO and the Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC) initiated the development of the FFY 2015-2018 Montachusett TIP. At both meetings, presentations and discussions were held related to the latest information regarding potential TIP projects. A listing of currently identified highway projects was presented. This listing represented the current known federal aid projects within the Montachusett region. The Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) scores and priorities from the FFY 2014-2017 TIP were also reviewed. Additionally, staff reviewed a memo to be distributed and posted to the MRPC website in English and Spanish announcing the development of the TIP, the meetings when it will be discussed and how to participate in the process. At the next MPO and MJTC meetings, the TIP project lists will again be reviewed and will include revised TEC scores for any appropriate project as well as scores for all identified new TIP projects.

6.5.3 Route 117 Corridor Profile

MRPC staff has submitted a draft of the Route 117 Corridor Profile in Lancaster to the town for review. A meeting was held on December 12, 2013 with town officials to receive their comments and recommendations. Final town comments were received in mid-January and the Final Corridor Profile has been prepared. MRPC staff are planning on a presentation to the Lancaster Planning Board on February 24, 2014 at 7:00 P.M. The study examines the road from the Leominster City Line/I-190 to the Bolton Town Line. Data collected included vehicle volumes, classifications, and speeds, crash reports, pavement and sign conditions and environmental constraints. Intersections of concern have been analyzed and potential improvements identified.

6.5.4 MassDOT Announcements

Staff has received information from MassDOT on the following items:

MassDOT has released *weMove Massachusetts: Planning for Performance* (WMM), the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The report summarizes MassDOT's new approach to multimodal capital planning and the use of scenario planning. Beginning on January 29, MassDOT will convene a series of six public meetings to present both the *weMove Massachusetts* report and the MassDOT Capital Investment Plan. The meetings locations and dates are as follows:

Wednesday 1/29 Boston (10 Park Plaza, 2nd Floor)
Wednesday 1/29 Worcester (Union Station)
Monday 2/3 Amherst (Bangs Community Center)
Monday 2/3 Pittsfield (Berkshire Athenaeum)
Wednesday 2/5 Dartmouth (UMass Dartmouth, Moot Court Room - UMass Law Building)
Monday 2/10 Lynn (Lynn City Hall – Council Chambers)

All meetings will take place from 6 to 8 pm

MassDOT released on January 10, 2014 the first draft five-year MassDOT Capital Investment Plan (CIP) for FY2014-FY2018. The \$12.4 billion program makes long-term investments that will create growth and opportunity for residents across the Commonwealth and represents the first unified, multi-modal capital investment plan covering all MassDOT highway and municipal projects, regional airports, rail, and transit, including the MBTA and Regional Transit Authorities.

MassDOT will host six public meetings across the Commonwealth to receive feedback on the draft CIP plan, which is expected to be delivered to the MassDOT Board of Directors for consideration in February. Meetings will be held at the same time and locations as the *weMove Massachusetts: Planning for Performance* LRTP presentations listed above. To see the plan, it is available on the website, <http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/InformationCenter/DocumentsPresentations.aspx>.

MassDOT is developing a systematic low cost strategy to address the issue of fatalities and injuries resulting from lane departure crashes in the Commonwealth. The concept is that cities and towns, that are interested in participating, would submit a brief application to MassDOT for each high crash curve. MassDOT staff or consultant would visit each location and sketch up a sign plan that would be submitted to the community for approval. Once approved, MassDOT would provide the community with signs and posts for them to install. In the future there will be an evaluation of the effectiveness through the collection of crash data. MassDOT has asked the RPA's thoughts on the process and to distribute the concept to our communities to see if this will work for them. MRPC staff has prepared an email outlining the program and the draft application that has been distributed to various community departments within the region for their review. Copies are available.

MassDOT is also developing a concept to address the top pedestrian and bicycle crash areas in the state and then fund educational programs on pedestrian and bicycle safety. The program would also include targeted enforcement programs by funding with the police departments to focus on bicycle and pedestrian related issues. Additionally, in a future year, the program may incorporate infrastructure improvements. MassDOT has asked the RPA's thoughts on the process and to distribute the concept to our communities to see if this will work for them. MRPC staff has prepared an email outlining the program and the draft application that has been distributed to various community departments within the region for their review. Copies are also available.

6.5.5 Next MPO Meeting – February 12, 2014 at 1:00 PM
Next MJTC Meeting – February 19, 2014 at 7:00 PM

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, V. Koivumaki adjourned the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

LIST OF EXHIBITS DISTRIBUTED AT THIS MEETING:

November 26, 2013 Meetings Minutes
January 2014 Cash Schedule
January 28, 2014 Handout
Executive Director Announcements
Executive Director Reports and Resolutions
WeMove Massachusetts 2014 Meeting notice
MRPC TIP Calendar/Schedule
FTA Assurances
Draft CIP Announcement
PED Bike Program Comment Memo
Public Input Memo FFY2015-2018 TIP
Draft TIP Project Elements

January 28, 2014 – MRPC MEETING ATTENDANCE

NAME	MUNICIPALITY	DELEGATION	APPOINTMENT DATE	PRESENT	ABSENT
R. Hoyt	Ashburnham	Member	7.2011	X	
D. Phyfe	Ashburnham	Alternate	7.2013		X
A. Pease	Ashby	Member	7.2001	X	
W. Stacy	Ashby	Alternate	7.2005		X
	Athol	Member			
	Athol	Alternate			
P. Johnston	Ayer	Member	12.2011		X
	Ayer	Alternate			
P. Duffy	Clinton	Member	12.2011	X	
	Clinton	Alternate			
P. Lowitt	Devens	Non-Voting	7.2001		X
P. Caron	Fitchburg	Member	7.2002	X	
	Fitchburg	Alternate			
A. Gross	Gardner	Member	2.2005		X
	Gardner	Alternate			
D. Manugian	Groton	Member	7.2009		X
A. Eliot	Groton	Alternate	7.2008		X
J. Hutchinson	Harvard	Member	7.2012		X
T. Clark	Harvard	Alternate	7.2011		X
A. Sheipers	Hubbardston	Member	7.2013		X
	Hubbardston	Alternate			
V. Koivumaki	Lancaster	Member	7.2000	X	
E. Christoph	Lancaster	Alternate	7.1992		X
	Leominster	Member			
	Leominster	Alternate			
J. Bilotta	Lunenburg	Member	2.2010	X	
R. Bowen	Lunenburg	Alternate	7.2003		X
R. Rocheleau	Petersham	Member	7.2011		X
E. Anderson	Petersham	Alternate	7.2004		X
J. Telepciak	Phillipston	Member	10.2010	X	
	Phillipston	Alternate			
V. Andreliunas	Royalston	Member	2.1991		X
J. Hardie	Royalston	Alternate	7.2007		X
J. Greeno	Shirley	Member	7.2011		X
	Shirley	Alternate			
M. Radzicki	Sterling	Member	7.2011		X
B. Pattachiola	Sterling	Alternate	9.2012		X
C. Carroll	Templeton	Member	7.2011		X
	Templeton	Alternate			
C. Jones	Townsend	Member	2.2011	X	
L. Shifrin	Townsend	Alternate	12.2010		X
M. Fortin	Westminster	Member	7.2011		X
	Westminster	Alternate			
G. Corbosiero	Winchendon	Member	7.2011	X	
J. Kreidler	Winchendon	Alternate	7.2010		X

STAFF PRESENT: George Snow, George Kahale, Jason Stanton, Brad Harris, Bobbi Jo Johnson, Linda Parmenter, Kevin Flynn, Stephanie Brow, Brian Doherty, Sheri Bean, Glenn Eaton

GUESTS: Mark Goldstein, MRPC Legal Counsel, Roland Lambalot