

**MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES  
MAY 26, 2015 MINUTES**

**1. INTRODUCTIONS**

V. Koivumaki called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. All present introduced themselves.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 28, 2015 MEETING MINUTES**

M. Pineo moved that the minutes of April 28, 2015 be approved as printed. The motion was seconded and passed with G. Corbosiero abstaining.

**3. TREASURER'S REPORT**

A. Pease read the April 2015 cash schedule. Balance after last warrant \$178,325.59; Total receipts this month \$99,331.76; Total cash on hand before this warrant \$277,657.14; Less: amount of this warrant \$137,158.96: Balance after this warrant \$99,387.13.

G. Corbosiero moved to accept the April 2015 cash schedules as read subject to audit and to be placed on file. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

G. Eaton mentioned we will pay off our line of credit this week. The balance is \$16,250.00.

**4. SLATE OF OFFICERS**

The presentation of the Slate of Officers was postponed until June 23, 2015 at 6:45 p.m.

**5. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

**5.1 Announcement from the Executive Director**

G. Eaton presented and explained a handout on Technical Assistance Connect (TAC). TAC coordinates local technical assistance efforts in cities and towns in Massachusetts.

G. Eaton presented a handout on Central MA Data Common. J. Stanton explained Central MA Data Common website was launched and it is targeted towards planners which allows users to gather census data and other types of publicly available data sets. The website is [centralmass.datacommon.org](http://centralmass.datacommon.org).

G. Eaton presented the draft MRPC Meeting attendance survey results. G. Eaton explained initial analysis shows that two-thirds of the respondents indicated they don't attend meeting on monthly basis. There appears to be conflicting schedules. Meetings on noon on Wednesdays was the most popular time for a meeting. Economic Development was the top issue that respondents were interested in.

L. Parmenter added that the survey was sent to gather information on how to increase MRPC Meeting Attendance. Surveys were sent in April to all members and alternates of the 22 cities and towns. We received 11 responses.

L. Parmenter explained that survey results also indicate that people do not attend meetings because of meeting fatigue. Also of interest was that 60% of the respondents indicated that the MRPC should meet quarterly.

V. Koivumaki stated that we should also look at how often a community is represented at meetings. The MRPC bylaw is written so that the Executive Committee can vote on behalf of the MRPC if there is no quorum present. All can attend Executive Committee Meetings as they are open meetings. We may want to consider quarterly MRPC meetings in the future. Whatever is decided upon we should have some substantive presentation of value to the communities.

G. Eaton indicated he will provide final survey results at the June 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting along with community representation data.

## **5.2 A95 Regional Review**

G. Eaton indicated that the Department of Conservation and Recreation has an interest in the acquisition of approximately 72 acres of land in Petersham. The proposed use for the property will be protection of open space and limited public access for passive outdoor recreational purposes.

G. Corbosiero moved that the MRPC authorizes its Director to sign the waiver of the 120 day notice period. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

## **5.3 FY15 and FY16 Budgetary Matters**

G. Eaton explained the FY16 Budget will be brought to the Commission for approval at the June 23, 2015 meeting and an amended FY15 budget. Rebuilding of the organization and salaries will also be discussed further at the Executive Committee Meeting to be held on June 23, 2015.

## **5.4 Status of Hiring of Planner and Traffic Technicians**

G. Eaton stated that none of the applicants for the planner position meet the minimum requirements. The Planner position will be revised and re-advertised. Traffic technicians are presently being interviewed.

## **5.5 Operational Issues**

J. Stanton mentioned that MRPC will be switching its telephone and internet provider to Comcast this month. The switch will enable MRPC to have faster internet service and save MRPC money.

# **6. STATUS REPORTS**

## **6.1 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING**

### **6.1.1 MEC, Inc. - Receivership Projects**

Mr. Eaton has been managing the daily tasks needed to keep this project moving forward. He is being assisted by Bobbi Jo Johnson, Fiscal Director. A status of each of the receivership projects in Athol follows.

Athol

112 Harvard Avenue – On June 3<sup>rd</sup> MEC should have approval from the Housing Court to take legal ownership of this property. After MEC has received title to the property it will engage a Realtor to market the property, hopefully for sale this summer.

1158 Main Street – MEC is in the process of seeking relief from the community for its clean-and-secure investment into this property.

1768-70 Main Street – MEC is in the process of seeking relief from the community for its clean-and-secure investment into this property.

107 Stevens Street – Duetsche Bank (DB) sent a settlement agreement to MEC including the offer to pay MEC for its full investment for cleaning, securing and rehabilitating this property. DB will send MEC a check to reimburse it for all of its costs within three to four weeks of the date that the settlement agreement has been fully executed.

207 Adams Drive – MEC has applied for financing to complete the necessary repairs to this property and proceed to auction upon the completion of rehabilitation.

41 Lewis Street – MEC has applied for financing to complete the necessary repairs to this property and proceed to auction upon the completion of rehabilitation.

119 Everett Avenue – MEC has applied for financing to complete the necessary repairs to this property and proceed to auction upon the completion of rehabilitation.

#### **6.1.2 MEC Ashburnham Affordable Housing Project – 32 Whitney Drive**

32 Whitney Drive. The roof is on, the windows have been installed, and electrical and plumbing tasks are in full swing. Sheet-rocking has been completed. Insulating and interior painting projects have been initiated and will be completed as soon as the Monty Tech students are done on the property by subcontractors. Pouring of concrete to create the garage floor must be completed.

G. Eaton is in the process of procuring for a 40B lottery specialist as a consultant to market and sell this property.

#### **6.1.3 MEC Ashburnham Affordable Housing Project – 10 Monroe Drive**

With approval of the MEC Board of Directors Mr. Eaton applied for financing for this, second project with Mark Dymek (developer) and Monty Tech to finance the construction of this project in the upcoming school year (2015-2016). Mr. Eaton's goal is to have the foundation poured by August 14, 2015.

#### **6.1.4 Community Development Block Grants**

The FFY15 Shirley-Lancaster CDBG proposal, prepared by Mr. John Hume and others in February 2015, is still pending.

#### **6.1.5 Distressed Property Identification and Revitalization (DPIR) Grant Program**

Linda Parmenter, Administrative and Human Resources Director volunteered to become the team leader for this project. Meetings have been held with local officials from Athol and Fitchburg concerning this program. Future meetings have been planned to update municipal staff. Other meetings are in the process of being set up. This project will continue through December 2015.

## **6.2 COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING**

### **6.2.1 Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA)**

EDA has reviewed the Montachusett Region Planning Commission (MRPC) Draft update of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and it was determined by EDA overall the plan meets the EDA requirements and demonstrates a comprehensive view of the region. The document has been posted on the MRPC web site ([www.MRPC.org](http://www.MRPC.org)).

### **6.2.2 Hazard Mitigation Plan Update Project**

MRPC Staff received comments from Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) that have been addressed. The plan has been resubmitted to MEMA.

### **6.2.3 District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA)**

MRPC staff is working on the following DLTA projects:

1. **Fitchburg:** Continuation of investigating/researching appropriate zoning changes around Wachusett Station and the new Great Wolf Lodge resort. MRPC has a signed contract with Fitchburg for this project with an approved scope of work. MRPC staff has been in regular contact with the Fitchburg Planning Dept. and attending Planning Board meetings to review materials with the Planning Board and obtain input.
2. **Winchendon:** Master Plan Transportation Element. MRPC has a signed contract with Winchendon for this project with an approved scope of work. MRPC staff attended a Winchendon Master Plan Vision Session in April and has initiated transportation data collection/analysis.
3. **Sterling:** Review and update zoning bylaws to encourage the development and redevelopment of commercial property in a manner that reflects the interests and needs of the community. MRPC has a signed contract with Sterling for this project with an approved scope of work and has been attending Sterling Economic Development Committee meetings to review materials and obtain input.

A second DLTA request for Service Delivery was issued to all Montachusett communities on April 1<sup>st</sup> and proposal due dates is scheduled for Noon, May 22, 2015. Awards will be made at the May 26<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission meeting.

### **District Local Technical Assistance Program**

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

G. Eaton reported that in May 2015, a total of five (5) proposals were received for use of District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) resources to provide a variety of services. The five proposals received are as follows:

1. **Lancaster:** Continuing to examine the creation of village zoning district(s).
2. **Ashby:** Update Housing Chapter of the 2004 Ashby Community Development Plan (E.O. 418 plan) and creation of a new Transportation Chapter as an update to the 2004 Ashby Community Development Plan.
3. **Shirley:** Update the 2010 Economic Development Element of the Master Plan and assist with the development and tabulation of a town wide survey for the Master Plan.
4. **Royalston:** Identification of potential areas that can support housing and economic development.
5. **Winchendon:** Update to the Services and Facilities Chapter of the Winchendon Master Plan

Proposals were forwarded to the state's Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and MRPC staff is waiting for comments/suggestions/approval.

P. Caron moved that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) recommends that #1 through #5 of the above-named proposals and project requests for District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA), if eligible, be **conditionally** awarded based upon further communication/ clarification with the applying communities 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 #5) 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 (2015).
3. The award of services from the MRPC is subject to the:
  - a. Funding available to the MRPC during the program year (2015);
  - 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.

L. Parmenter mentioned that there is still DLTA monies available and we will be sending out another Request for Service Delivery.

#### **6.2.4 Shirley Master Plan**

The Town of Shirley is in the early stages of updating its Master Plan and a Master Plan Public Forum was held to gain insight from the public. The Forum was held on Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup> from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Shirley Middle School Cafeteria, 1 Hospital Road, Shirley, MA. This initial event focused on Shirley’s Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) in terms of housing, economic development, open space and recreation, services and facilities, natural and cultural resources, land use, and transportation. Public input is a critical element of the study.

### **6.3 GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)**

#### **6.3.1 MRMapper & Mobile Apps**

We are consistently adding data, applications and/or enhancing tools in MRMapper as the need arises so please check back frequently to see what’s new. We are currently working on migrating all applications to JavaScript. This is a core change that will allow users to consume MRMapper content on most browsers and, most importantly, without plugins that currently restrict usage on mobile devices. This process will be ongoing for several months.

Mobile Apps are becoming increasingly popular. They are designed for two main purposes- (1) informing the public and (2) improving efficiency in data collection and field work. Public apps are created to allow the public to view data online in any browser and on any device. Data collection apps are custom designed by the MRPC to the users' field of work or area of interest.

Currently the MRPC is working on creating internal-only and public sites for the Town of Westminster. We are also in the process of updating the Town of Shirley's internal-only site as well as creating a public site.

### **6.3.2 Central Mass Evacuation Plan – Phase 2 & Evacuation Apps**

Phase 2 of the project has begun and 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. These events are being held Thursday June 11th at Worcester Technical High School and on Tuesday, June 23rd at Monty Tech.

Additionally mobile and desktop application will be created to allow the communities to map real-time evacuation scenarios, edit Critical Infrastructure data and allow other authorized users and organizations to view these applications for monitoring purposes. These applications will be highlighted at the exercises noted above.

### **6.3.3 RTP 2016 Mapping**

We are currently working on a number of maps to be included in the RTP 2016 project. This project will be ongoing for the next few months.

### **6.3.4 MART Bus Route Shelter Maps**

The MRPC is currently working on updates to the MART bus routes as well as maps that will be displayed inside the bus shelters showing a users' current location in relation to the bus route and interchanges. This project is expected to be completed in mid-June.

## **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 the MBTA's Commuter Rail Layover Facility at the Westminster Business Park is ongoing. There will be a delay for the substantial project completion to Mid-2016 due to Pan Am's schedule. Pan Am will not be able to complete work on the tracks and signalization until 2016, with full completion scheduled for September 2016. The Development Road Extension is approximately 98% complete. Staff is working with the City of Fitchburg and Westminster to transfer the ownership of the property. Staff continues to work with Pan Am Railways and the City of Fitchburg to transfer 5<sup>th</sup> Mass Turnpike property to MART. Staff is also assisting MART and the Consultant in obtaining a temporary construction easement from the adjacent properties owners to construct the sidewalk on Authority Drive and continues to attend and assist at the monthly project coordination meeting with FTA, MBTA and the Engineers.

### **6.4.2 Ayer Parking Facility**

FTA officials indicated that MART has to resolve the pedestrian access issues at the station before the project can move forward. MBTA and the property owner reached an agreement to resolve the pedestrian access issues. After months of negotiations and meetings, both parties came to common ground. The property owner will transfer a parcel to MART and then it will permanently be transferred to the Town of Ayer. The property transfer will enable access to the train station with a pedestrian walkway and a proposed driveway with a vehicular drop-off and turnaround. Mr. Kahale continues to assist MART, FTA, MBTA and the Town of Ayer to

move forward with the construction of the proposed project of Ayer commuter rail surface parking lot for 200 parking spaces at the Ayer Rail Trail parking lot location at Park Street. As soon as the property transfer for the pedestrian access takes place the process of the appraisal will start.

#### **6.4.3 Fitchburg Commuter Rail Line Improvements**

The 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 Concord. 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 interlocking in Lunenburg (*CPF is Control Point for Freight that enable trains to move from one track to another*) . Work on the project is continuing along the Fitchburg Line corridor and South Acton Station. The construction of Littleton Station was completed ahead of schedule; and the MBTA's commuter parking of 200 parking spaces is full to capacity daily. MAPC is conducting a parking needs assessment for the Littleton commuter rail station to determine its future parking needs. Also the double tracking work along the corridor has been completed.

#### **6.4.4 Lunenburg Bus Route**

Staff is assisting MART on a proposed Bus Route to serve Lunenburg residents and seniors; to connect to Lunenburg Crossing/Shopping Center, the Commuter Rail Station and Lunenburg Town Center.

#### **6.4.5 Westminster Bus Route**

Staff is assisting MART on a proposed Bus Route to serve Westminster residents; to connect to Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC), the Commuter Rail Station and Gardner City Center.

#### **6.4.6 MBTA Fitchburg Commuter Rail Line Suspension of Weekend Train Service**

Beginning Saturday, April 25, through Sunday, November 22, 2015 weekend Fitchburg Line service will be suspended along the entire line due to the Fitchburg Commuter Rail Line Improvement Project to allow work to be performed between North Station and Fitchburg. Busing will not be provided during weekend service interruptions. Customers are advised to seek alternate modes of transportation. Weekday service is not affected by the ongoing improvement work. Regular weekend service will be provided on Memorial Day weekend (May 23-24), Fourth of July weekend (July 4-5), Labor Day weekend (September 5-6), and Thanksgiving weekend (November 28-29).

### **6.5 TRANSPORTATION**

#### **6.5.1 Montachusett Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Update**

MRPC is continuing development of the 2016 RTP Update. Draft chapters are under review. The state has provided us with population and employment projections for our communities for 2020, 2030 and 2040. Staff has reviewed the figures and submitted comments to MassDOT. The projections have been posted to our RTP website accessible through [www.mrpc.org](http://www.mrpc.org).

The Goals and Objectives for the RTP have been developed and posted to the website. The MPO reviewed them at their May 13<sup>th</sup> meeting and discussed various aspects. In addition, a



listing of performance measures for these goals has been compiled and included with the Goals and Objectives. Comments are welcomed. Staff is proceeding with the development of various chapters and copies should soon be on the website.

### **6.5.2 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) FFY 2016-2019**

MRPC staff is continuing work on the development of the next TIP that will cover FFY 2016-2019. After discussions with MassDOT, two funding scenarios were developed and reviewed at the May 13th MPO meeting. After discussion, it was decided to focus on further development of Scenario 2. Staff will now work to compile a full draft report for review by the MPO and release for public comment. Federal aid financial target figures were provided to us by MassDOT. Figures are constant for FFY 2016 at approximately \$7.7 million but increase to \$9.6 million in FFY 2018 and 2019.

### **6.5.3 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) 2015-2016**

The MRPC is continuing work on the development of the next UPWP that will cover October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016. The UPWP is a budget and programming tool that outlines our work activities for the year. Some tasks remain constant from year to year such as the development of the TIP and UPWP as well as our Data Collection efforts. Since the last meeting, MRPC was notified by MassDOT of an error in the formula to calculate "PL" allocations. This error was corrected and new allocations compiled. Fortunately for the MRPC, we were one of two regions that saw an increase in our allotment. The correct "PL" allocation for FFY 2016 is \$585,871. This is an increase of \$49,092 from the prior "incorrect" amount of \$536,779. A preliminary draft budget and task list was reviewed at the MPO meeting and based on the comments a draft document will be compiled for the next meeting for public release.

### **6.5.4 Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MMPO)**

The Montachusett MPO voted to formally endorse TIP Amendments 1 and 2 to the FFY 2015-2018 TIP. Amendment #1 was for the removal of project 607114 LANCASTER - FULL BRIDGE REPLACEMENT, L-02-018, JACKSON ROAD OVER ROUTE 2 from Section 1B Federal Aid Bridge Projects of the FFY 2015 Highway Element. MassDOT had indicated that the funding for this project was already obligated and therefore it is no longer necessary to be programmed on the TIP. Amendment #2 was for the FFY 2015 Transit Element as a result of recent Transit Grant Application awards and additional project updates by MART.

**Next MPO Meeting – June 17, 2015 at 1:00 PM**

**Next MJTC Meeting – June 17, 2015 at 7:00 PM**

**Next MPO Meeting – July 22, 2015 at 1:00 PM**

**Next MJTC Meeting – July 15, 2015 at 7:00 PM**

## **7. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

### **LIST OF DOCUMENTS DISTRIBUTED AT THE MEETING:**

May 26, 2015 Handout

April 28, 2015 Minutes  
MRPC Meeting Attendance Survey Results  
Central MA Data Common Report  
Technical Assistance Connect Report  
Culvert Survey 2015  
Draft RTP Goals, Objectives and Performance Measures  
Draft Transit TIP List  
Revised Budget Tasks  
TIP & UPWP Work Schedule 2015 Updated  
TIP Scenario Comparison FFY2016 - 2019  
Connecting Communities Along our Trails Flyer

## MRPC Meeting Attendance List

*Alphabetically by Community*

Name	M/A	Representing	Appointment Date	PRESENT	ABSENT
Davis, Nick	A	Ashburnham	7.2014		X
Hoyt, Roger	M	Ashburnham	7.2011		X
Pease, Alan	M	Ashby	7.2001	X	
Stacy, Wayne	A	Ashby	7.2005		X
Dodge, Alan	A	Athol	4.2014		X
Johnston, Peter	M	Ayer	12.2011		X
Maher, David	A	Ayer	7.2014		X
Duffy, Phil	M	Clinton	12.2011		X
Lowitt, Peter	N/V	DREZ	7.2001		X
Caron, Paula	M	Fitchburg	7.2002	X	
Gross, Allen	M	Gardner	2.2005		X
Manugian, David	M	Groton	7.2009		X
Hutchinson, Joe	M	Harvard	7.2012		X
Sheipers, Anita	A	Hubbardston	7.2013		X
Christoph, Eugene	A	Lancaster	7.1992		X
Koivumaki, Victor	M	Lancaster	7.2000	X	
Bilotta, Joanna	M	Lunenburg	2.201		X
Telepciak, John	A	Phillipston	10.201		X
Andreluinas, Vyto	M	Royalston	2.1991		X
Hardie, John	A	Royalston	7.2007		X
Greeno, Jonathan	M	Shirley	7.2014		X
Pineo, Michael	M	Sterling	7.2014	X	
Kilcoyne, John	A	Sterling	7.2014		X
Carroll, Charles	A	Templeton	7.2011		X
Bozicas, Jerrilyn	M	Townsend	7.2014		X
Shifrin, Laura	A	Townsend	7.2010	x	
Shenk, Jay	M	Westminster	7.2014		X
Corbosiero, Guy	M	Winchendon	7.2011	x	
Kreidler, James	A	Winchendon	7.2010		X

**STAFF PRESENT:** Glenn Eaton, Jason Stanton. Brian Doherty, George Kahale, Linda Parmenter, Brad Harris, George Snow, Bobbi Jo Johnson