

**MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION  
JANUARY 26, 2016 MEETING MINUTES**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

V. Koivumaki called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. All present were introduced .

A moment of silence was held in memory of Eugene "Pete" Christoph.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 8, 2015 MEETING MINUTES**

J. Telepciak moved that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission approve the December 8, 2015 minutes as printed. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

**3. TREASURER'S REPORT**

A. Pease read the November 2015 cash schedule. Balance after last warrant \$107,686.42; Total receipts this month \$50,667.03; Total cash on hand before this warrant \$158,353.45; Less: amount of this warrant \$83,325.76: Balance after this warrant \$75,181.95.

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

A. Pease read the December 2015 cash schedule. Balance after last warrant \$75,181.95; Total receipts this month \$277,110.49; Total cash on hand before this warrant \$352,292.44; Less: amount of this warrant \$156,306.37 Balance after this warrant \$196,157.92.

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

**4. PEER-TO-PEER TRAINING FOR PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS AND CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS IN THE REGION**

Discussion occurred regarding the status of the Caucus Meetings for the appointment of Subregion representatives to the Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization as well as the role and responsibilities of the representative.

Discussion occurred regarding the process for the sale of Municipally Owned Properties. M. Goldstein offered to contact Shaun Suhoski, Athol Town Manager and Calvin Brooks, Fitchburg Treasurer and Collector to make a presentation regarding this issue at an upcoming MRPC Meeting.

**5. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

**5.1 Executive Director's Report for Best Practices to be considered as Bylaw Amendments and/or Policies**

Bylaw change proposed to ensure that the commissioners rotate through all positions on the Executive Committee to maximize the education, experience and awareness of all positions held by commissioners (Member, Member at Large, Secretary, Assistant Treasurer, Treasurer, Vice Chairman and Chairman) and strengthen the Board. Models of the bylaws of other regional planning

agencies will be provided to the commissioners on February 23<sup>rd</sup> for a continuation of this discussion. See the following excerpt of the MRPC's existing bylaws (as amended in May 2008) with some proposed alterations (*in italic text*) to meet the above-cited goal.

### **Proposed Amendments to Bylaw, Article II for discussion**

#### Article II COMMISSION ORGANIZATION

1. Election of Officers of the Planning Commission that Serve on the Executive Committee.
  - a. Each year, in the month of June, the Commission shall elect from its members a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and two at-large members, *for a period of one year for each position.*
    - i. *To be deemed to be eligible for the positions of Members At Large the nominees must have served as a Member of the Commission for a period of one year.*
    - ii. *To be deemed to be eligible for the position of Secretary the nominee must have served as a Member At Large for one year.*
    - iii. *To be deemed to be eligible for the position of Assistant Treasurer the nominee must have served as the Secretary for one year.*
    - iv. *To be deemed to be eligible for the position of Treasurer the nominee must have served as the Assistant Treasurer for a period of one year.*
    - v. *To be deemed to be eligible for the position of Vice Chairman the nominee must have served as the Treasurer for a period of one year.*
    - vi. *To be deemed to be eligible for the position of Chairman the nominee must have served as the Vice Chairman for a period of one year.*
  - b. *The following procedures shall be followed.* The MRPC shall do so with the assistance from a Nominating Committee.
    - i. Duties of the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall review the qualifications and availability of Regional Planning Commission delegates and shall recommend at the regular May meeting a slate of officers for the coming year.
  - c. Makeup of the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall consist of at least three members, one of whom shall have served previously as an officer of the Commission.
  - d. Procedures for the Establishment of the Annual Ad-hoc Nominating Committee and the Election of the Members of the Executive Committee
    - i. March of Each Year: Call for Participation on the Nominating Committee.
      1. The Chairman shall call for nominations to the Nominating Committee at the March MRPC meeting.
    - ii. April of Each Year: Nominating Committee.

1. A Nominating Committee shall be elected by the full Commission in the month of April.
- iii. May of Each Year: Other Candidates May be Considered.
  1. The Nominating Committee shall present a slate of proposed members of the Executive Committee. Other delegates may be added to this slate as candidates for the various Commission offices and at-large positions by nominations from the floor of the May meeting of the Planning Commission.
- iv. June of Each Year: Vote for the Slate of officers and at-large members who will then serve as the members of the Executive Committee for the following fiscal year.

The selection of Officers shall be by majority vote of those delegates present and acting at the June meeting of the Commission, a quorum being present. The Chairperson will appoint a successor to any vacancy that may occur on the Nominating Committee.

2. There shall be an Executive Committee of the MRPC. The members of the Executive Committee shall consist of the five Officers of the Planning Commission, plus two members of the Planning Commission "at large". Its membership shall be established annually in accordance with the procedures as detailed, below.
  - a. Executive Committee Powers. The powers of the Executive Committee shall be as follows.
    - i. Meet as needed to consider policy matters.
    - ii. Only when the regular meeting of the Planning Commission fails to achieve a quorum, and within the Regional Planning Law (MGL Chapter 40B, Section 4A) may the Executive Committee act on behalf of the Planning Commission, for the following purposes:
      1. Approving the warrant
      2. Reviewing and acting upon regional reviews
      3. Addressing other functions deemed critically important to the operation of the planning district, as needed.
  - b. Term of Executive Committee Members.
    - i. The effective term of newly elected MRPC officers will begin July 1.
  - c. Mid-term Vacancies on the Executive Committee.
    - i. In the case that any of the above positions become vacant, the Commission shall elect at its next meeting, a member to fill the position until the next annual election.
3. The duties of the elected officers of the Commission are as follows:
  - A. Chairman.

- a. The Chairman shall preside at all meetings of the Commission, and authenticate by his/her signature, when necessary, all the acts, orders and proceedings of the Commission.
- B. Vice Chairman.
  - a. The Vice-Chairman shall act for the Chairman during his/her absence from the chair, and in the case of the position of Chairman becoming vacant shall act as Chairman in all matters until the position is again filled as set forth above.
- C. Secretary.
  - a. The Secretary of the Commission shall be the recording officer of the Commission and the custodian of its records except such as are specifically assigned to others. These records shall be open to inspection by any member at reasonable times and where a committee needs any records for the proper performance of its duties, they shall be made available to its Chairman.
  - b. The Secretary shall keep a register of the members and call the roll when required; notify officers, committees and delegates of their election or appointment, and send out proper notices of all called meetings.
- D. Treasurer.
  - a. The Treasurer of the Commission shall be the fiscal agent of the Commission, and it shall be his/her duty to keep proper financial records of the Commission and to carryout financial matters in accordance with Massachusetts G.L. Chapter 40B. The Treasurer may demand thirty (30) days notice thereof.
  - b. *The Treasurer shall act for the Chairman and the Vice Chairman during their absence from the chair, and in the case of the positions of Chairman and Vice Chairman becoming vacant shall act as Chairman in all matters until the position is again filled as set forth above.*
  - c. The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer shall give the Commission bond, with a surety company, authorized to transact business in the Commonwealth as surety, for the faithful performance of their duties in such sums and upon such conditions as the Commission shall require.
  - d. The Treasurer and the Assistant Treasurer (see titles and responsibilities below) will normally co-sign checks. In order to assure that there will be two signatures on each check, whenever it is particularly difficult or physically impossible for either the Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer to sign checks, the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary, in that order, are authorized to sign checks. The Commission may also authorize the Executive Director and other staff (at the discretion of and in absence of the Executive Director) be allowed to sign checks along with Commission officers.
- E. Assistant Treasurer.
  - a. The Assistant Treasurer shall have the authority and power of the Treasurer and to act as Treasurer in his/her absence. The fiscal year of the Commission shall start on July 1 of each calendar year and end on June 30 of the following calendar year.

- b. *The Assistant Treasurer shall act for the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Treasurer during their absence from the chair, and in the case of the positions of Chairman, Vice Chairman and Treasurer becoming vacant shall act as Chairman in all matters until the position is again filled as set forth above.*

Discussion followed regarding the proposed amendment and the uniqueness of how members to the MRPC are appointed and how long they serve; the restrictiveness of the proposed amendment; the process of board development; and the challenge of getting member communities to attend the meetings.

After further discussion, it was decided that members would reach out to other communities to encourage them to attend MRPC Meetings; the Director and Chairman would meet regarding board development; the Director would reach out to other organizations to obtain board development models and that the proposed amendment would be discussed further at upcoming meetings.

## **5.2 Request for Approval of the Commissioners to Advertise and Hire One to Two Full-Time Planning Employee(s)**

G. Eaton reported that a projection of all contracted revenue indicates that the agency has the financial capacity to hire one to two, new full-time employee(s) to complete transportation, comprehensive, transit planning projects and related GIS services. Relevant contracts and sources of funds for this position will be the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) or "3C," District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA), Economic Development Administration (EDA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

Hiring a new multi-disciplined Planner will enable the MRPC to deliver products such as a transportation model, community, economic and land use reports related to the DLTA program and commuter-related planning studies and reports connected with this agency's transit planning services. Familiarity with and use of GIS are also needed. Administratively this all-purpose planner will report to Mr. Brad Harris, Transportation Projects Director. Mr. John Hume, Planning and Development Director and Mr. George Kahale, Transit Projects Director will have equal access to this multifaceted individual. The relevant job description includes the before-mentioned policy including narrative that informs the new employee that any conflict in projects assigned by the supervisor and his two colleagues will be settled by the Executive Director.

Management's intent is to advertise for a Regional Planner at a starting salary not to exceed \$42,235 Grade 2, Step 2. Should the MRPC not find a qualified candidate to fill a Regional Planner position then MRPC we will need to advertise for a Principal Planner at a starting between \$45,428, Grade 4, Step 1 and \$47,728, Grade 4, Step 3.

Advertising would take place by the first week of February with a target hiring period of early April.

G. Corbosiero moved that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission approves of the Executive Director's request to advertise for and hire a new, full-time (37.5 hours weekly) Planner ("Regional" or "Principal" as deemed appropriate by the Executive Director) to deliver planning and GIS services as directed by the Executive Director in accordance with the aforementioned starting grades, steps and salaries detailed in the above report. The successful candidate will be hired based upon the candidate(s) combination of education and relevant

experience that meet both the short and long term needs of the Commission. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

**5.3 Requests for Staff to Attend Conference/Seminars/Training Sessions Sponsored by American Planning Association, Economic Development Administration and ESRI**

**American Planning Association (APA) Annual Conference – April 1<sup>st</sup> through the 5<sup>th</sup> in Phoenix, AZ**

Mr. Eaton requests that the agency send two employees to the American Planning Association’s Annual Conference to be held this year in Phoenix, AZ. Approval in January is requested so that the MRPC may take advantage of lower travel costs and to ensure placements at the conference and hotel.

Four of the MRPC’s existing 14 employees have been to one or more APA conferences in past years; allowing Mr. Noam Goldstein to attend this year will expand attendance and exposure to this annual event to five. Attending this conference allows employees to learn about practical applications of urban and regional planning techniques.

Attending employees are obliged to bring new ideas to this agency and propose and implement new planning strategies that will improve MRPC’s planning products and benefit the region. Mr. Eaton’s attendance at the APA Conference would complement his participation at the ESRI (GIS) Use Conference to be held later in June.

Mr. Eaton requests approval to attend the conference for him (\$735) and Mr. Noam Goldstein, Regional Planner (\$1,050) for a total cost, for two conference registrations, of \$1,785 (to take advantage of early bird registration [by February 4<sup>th</sup>]). Additional sessions are requested for both employees; see below.

Conference Rates	Early Rate by 2/4/16	Regular Rate by 3/3/16	Late Rate from 3/4/16
APA members and speakers	\$735	\$785	\$835
Nonmembers	\$1,050	\$1,050	\$1,050
Discounted: Life, Retired, Early Career Membership Program (student and new professional) members	\$125	\$145	\$165
Nonmember planning officials	\$735	\$840	\$890

Attendance rates increase \$50 March 3<sup>rd</sup> and the late rate of an additional \$50 is in effect on March 4<sup>th</sup>.

## Professional Development and Focused GIS Sessions

Mr. Eaton requests approval to attend the conference and additional professional and agency development sessions, as follows:

- Planning Leadership Institute on Saturday from 7:30 AM through 5:30 PM (\$175)

In addition, with approval, Mr. Eaton and Mr. Goldstein would attend GIS-focused sessions, on Sunday from 8:00 AM through 6:00 PM, for a total budget of \$150 per employee or \$300, total, as follows:

- Innovative Mobile Planning Apps Challenge (\$25)
- Modern Trends in GIS for Planners
  - Leverage 3D in Your Next Comprehensive Plan (\$25)
  - Location Analytics to Build Resilient Communities (\$25)
  - Bringing Geography to Design and Planning Workflows (\$25)
  - Leverage 3D in Your Next Comprehensive Plan (\$25)
  - Publishing Story Maps: How to Tell the Story of Your Community (\$25)

Additional, individual costs would be as follows for air travel, lodging and meals, as follows:

- As of January 19<sup>th</sup> round trip air travel is approximately \$350, or less
- The cost for lodging is approximately \$865
- \$250+/- for meals and incidentals will be needed

The total proposed cost for Mr. Eaton would be \$2,525 and another \$2,665 for Mr. Goldstein. The combined total budget is \$5,190.

G. Corbosiero moved that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission hereby approves of the attendance of Mr. Noam Goldstein, Regional Planner and Mr. Glenn Eaton Executive Director at the Annual Planning Conference of the American Planning Association to be held this year in Phoenix, AZ from April 1 through April 5 for a total budget of \$5,190. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

## **Economic Development Administration Conference – April 6<sup>th</sup> through the 8<sup>th</sup> in Washington, DC**

Mr. Eaton requests that the agency send two employees to the Economic Development Administration's 2016 Conference to be held this in Washington, DC. Approval in January is requested so that the MRPC may take advantage of lower travel costs and to ensure placements at the conference and hotel.

Attending this conference will enable MRPC staff to support, clarify and seek technical assistance from EDA staff concerning this agency's pursuit of a \$100,000+/- grant proposal. The purpose of this proposal is to identify all, appropriate parcels suitable for the manufacturing industry throughout the region, focusing upon major road and rail corridors, vacant brownfields

and other appropriate sites. In addition, employees at the conference are obliged to bring new ideas to this agency and propose and implement new economic development planning strategies that will improve help the private and public sectors to retain and create jobs in our region.

Mr. Eaton advises the Commissioners to send Mr. John Hume, Planning and Development Director and Mr. Eaton, Executive Director.

All costs are as follows (per person): The cost for registration has not yet been published by the EDA; air fare up to \$200; lodging is \$700; and, approximately \$150 for meals and incidentals. The total cost for both employees is \$2,100, plus any cost for registering for the conference, if any. Approximately \$1,050 per employee is needed, not including the cost of registration.

G. Corbosiero moved that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission hereby approves of the attendance of Mr. John Hume, Planning and Development Director and Mr. Glenn Eaton, Executive Director at the Economic Development Administration Conference to be held this year in Washington, DC from April 6 through April 8 for a total cost of \$2,100, plus any cost for registering for the conference, if any. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

#### **ESRI User Conference – June 27<sup>th</sup> through July 1<sup>st</sup> in San Diego, CA**

Mr. Eaton requests that the agency authorize his attendance at the ESRI (GIS) User Conference to be held this year in San Diego, CA.

Attending this conference will allow the Executive Director to learn about practical applications of emerging GIS applications, such as web applications (WebApps), and three dimensional (3d) mapping. Attending this conference will broaden the spectrum of new ideas to MRPC and enable staff to propose and implement new planning strategies that will improve MRPC's planning products and benefit the region. Mr. Eaton wishes to hone the long term vision of GIS building upon successful outreach and new services available such as updating and providing local Assessors data on MRMapper and the introduction of successful WebApps to municipal safety and inspection departments. Newly acquired knowledge will be shared with all MRPC employees and the Commissioners and will be used to identify and pursue areas of new growth in the world of GIS. This information will be recorded in a written report about the conference, along with an action plan based for future GIS and planning services. A presentation for staff and commissioners will be provided in August 2016.

Mr. Eaton's attendance at the ESRI (GIS) Use Conference would complement his new knowledge gained at the APA Conference to be held earlier in April.

MRPC purchases an annual license for the GIS software which allows one MRPC employee to attend the ESRI (GIS) User Conference at no charge (a value of \$1,495); air fare up to \$600; lodging of \$1,700; and, approximately \$350 for meals and incidentals. The total cost for attending this conference is \$2,650 (the lodging cost of \$1,700 may be charged to the FY16 budget if it is pre-paid by the MRPC or in FY17 as the transaction will take place on July 1<sup>st</sup> (the check-out date from the hotel).



G. Corbosiero moved that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission hereby approves of the attendance of Mr. Glenn Eaton, Executive Director at the ESRI User Conference to be held this year in San Diego, CA from June 27 through July 1 for a total budget of \$2,650. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

## 6. STATUS REPORTS

### 6.1 GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

#### MRMapper And Mobile Apps

Significant upgrades were recently completed to the MRMapper site in order to increase the speed of the services.

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 the migration of all applications to JavaScript/HTML5. 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.

#### Community Development

- CDBG - We recently developed WebApps for Windshield Survey data collection for the communities of Ashby, Shirley and Winchendon. Data collection is ongoing. Once this process is complete we will create a mail merge document detailing property condition. Additionally, a series of maps will be completed, for inclusion in the CDBG application packets.

#### Comprehensive Planning

- DLTA - We are currently working on mapping for several DLTA projects. These projects, as well as others, will be ongoing for the next several months:
  - Sterling Rt 12 Corridor Economic Development Analysis
  - West Fitchburg Corridor Overlay District
  - Winchendon Master Plan Transportation Mapping
  - Winchendon Village District Mapping
  - Ashby Master Plan Mapping

#### Transportation

- Lancaster Complete Streets - We are currently in the final stages of mapping for a Complete Streets project for the Town of Lancaster and in cooperation with the Transportation Department. This project is expected to be completed in February.
- Travel – Time Analysis - Data was recently collected during the holiday season for four routes surrounding significant commercial areas. This data will be analyzed over the course of the Winter.

## **MEC**

- Athol Potential Receiverships App - We have completed the process of creating a WebApp for MEC to be used in tracking potential receivership properties in the Town of Athol. This project is ongoing.

## **MART**

- Athol – Orange Fixed Route Shuttle - We are in the process of creating bus route and stops for the Athol – Orange Fixed Route Shuttle. This project is ongoing as necessary information is provided by MART.
- Fitchburg/Leominster Bus Route System Updates – We are in the process of updating the bus routes and stops for the Fitchburg/Leominster system. This will include updating a series of maps related to this data. This project is expected to be complete in February.

## **Community-Related**

- Clinton CDBG - We recently developed WebApps for Windshield Survey data collection for the town of Clinton. Data collection is ongoing. Once this process is complete we will create a mail merge document detailing property condition, as well as a series of maps, for inclusion in the CDBG application packets. This project is expected to be completed soon, if not already.
- Lancaster Zoning Overlay Updates – We are in the process of updating the Town of Lancaster’s Zoning Overlay Map. This project is expected to be complete in February.
- Templeton Zoning Updates – We are in the process of updating the Town of Templeton’s Zoning Map. This project is expected to be complete in February.
- Harvard Open Space Plan Mapping - We are in the process of updating the Town of Templeton’s Open Space Plan Maps. This project is expected to be complete in February or March.

## **6.2 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

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

As part of this contract, MRPC provides assistance to communities seeking grant funds to improve economic vitality. MRPC staff is assisting Winchendon and Ashby to prepare a regional FY16 Community Development Block Grant application for Housing Rehabilitation, Residential Home Heating Fuel Assistance, and an Infrastructure Project along Chestnut Street in Winchendon. In addition, MRPC is preparing a regional application for Housing Rehabilitation and Residential Home Heating Fuel Assistance for Shirley and Townsend. This year, block grants are due on February 12<sup>th</sup>.

Upon completion of the CDBG proposals MRPC staff will prepare a competitive grant proposal for the completion of an industrial land siting analysis to be provided to communities and the private sector to encourage the development of appropriate sites so as to encourage manufacturing and the hiring of people in the Montachusett Region to better distribute economic wealth, increase household income and help to reverse the declining trend in the reduction of manufacturing in this area since past periods of economic decline, from the Depression in 1929 through the 1930s through the Great Recession of 2008-2009 and beyond.

**Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Montachusett Region Brownfields Assessment Program**

A Montachusett Brownfields Group (MBG) Committee Meeting was held on December 3<sup>rd</sup> at Can – Am Machinery 44 Old Princeton Road, Fitchburg. A representative of EPA was in attendance. At the meeting, the MBG reviewed and approved Environmental Site Assessment Requests (Site Nomination Forms) from the Town of Westminster (Old Town Hall) and the City of Gardner (158 Rear Main Street).

**Hazard Mitigation Plan Update Project**

MRPC staff received comments from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that are being addressed by MRPC.

**District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA)**

MRPC staff will be working on the following DLTA projects:

1. **Templeton:** Master Plan Land Use Element
2. **Shirley:** Feasibility Study comprised of recommendations to potentially join or not join a regional dispatch center. There are two regional dispatch centers in the neighboring communities of Groton and Devens. The study would evaluate each one and recommend the best option for Shirley.
3. **Sterling:** A DLTA report near completion for Sterling consists of recommendations to update zoning bylaws to encourage the development and redevelopment of commercial property in a manner that reflects the interests and needs of the community. This proposed project would implement recommendations.
4. **Townsend:** A DLTA report near completion for Townsend consists of recommendations to update bylaws to increase opportunities in Townsend. This proposed project would implement recommendations.
5. **Central Mass Grown:** Work with the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission on Central Mass Grown by utilizing \$7,500 in DLTA funds. The mission of Central Mass Grown is to strengthen the purchases and awareness of local goods in Worcester County.
6. **Winchendon:** Master Plan Land Use Element  
Proposals will be forwarded to the state’s Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and MRPC staff is waiting for comments/suggestions/approval.

**Shirley Master Plan Update**

MRPC staff is working on the Land Use Chapter and recommendations for the Historic and Cultural Resources, Services and Facilities Chapters. A Town – Wide Master Plan Survey was tabulated, a report was drafted, and the results were presented to the Shirley Board of Selectmen.

**MEC, Inc. - Receivership Projects**

*112 Harvard Avenue*

- Nothing new to report this month.

*41 Lewis Street*

- All renovations were completed on January 11, 2016. An auction in April is planned.

*207 Adams Drive*

- Final renovations began on January 11<sup>th</sup>. A May auction is planned.

*119 Everett Avenue*

- The loan proposal for exterior-only renovations, was approved by the MEC Board of Directors in May 2015. MEC's Director re-submitted the loan proposal to the bank in December 2015. Loan closing is imminent. Upon loan approval and closing, MEC will complete renovations to the outside of the building this winter and auction the property in the spring.

*1158 Main Street*

- MEC anticipates that its costs for cleaning and securing this property will be repaid by the bank by February. One February 3<sup>rd</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> MEC will seek the Housing Court's approval to terminate this receivership.

*1768-70 Main Street*

- Upon the request of the Attorney General and MEC this receivership was terminated by the Court on January 20<sup>th</sup>. MEC will seek reimbursement from the Athol's HomeCorps Grant Program Income generated from MEC, for the repayment of Athol's loan to MEC for improvements completed to 112 Harvard Avenue. MEC's investment is protected by a priority Lien; which is subordinate to municipal taxes and fees, but ahead of prior mortgages.

**MEC - Ashburnham Affordable Housing Project – 10 Monroe Drive**

Framing is completed, doors and windows have been installed, interior work is ongoing and the subsurface electrical conduit is now in place.

**MEC – 30 Powers Mill Road**

Nothing new to report this month.

**Community Development Block Grants**

The Housing Rehabilitation and Fuel Assistance Programs have received applications and conducted intakes and housing inspections. DHCD released funds to be expended on 12/30/2015. The program has submitted its first drawdown from DHCD for \$41,738.

MRPC and the Town of Shirley executed an Agreement for professional services for the Housing Rehabilitation Specialist. Doug Desmarais is a very experienced inspector for Housing Rehab programs in the Central MA and greater Boston areas. As of January 15, 2016 eight homes have had the initial inspection completed as well as the lead inspection. Four of these homes have had the scope of work developed. These milestones are above and beyond the minimum requirements to apply for a back-to-back Community Development Block Grant as required by the MA Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

The Community Development Manager has released a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to be posted for the purpose of creating a pool of licensed contractors who have direct and recent experience in residential rehab projects.

CDBG unit goals, for this Federal Fiscal Year 2015 (FFY15) Shirley and Lancaster Block Grant, are: 20 dwelling units for the Housing Rehab program (13 in Shirley and 7 in Lancaster); and, another 40 households for fuel assistance (26 in Shirley and 14 in Lancaster).

There is a very high demand for both of the programs. A total of 28 applicants have submitted applications for Housing Rehab and Fuel Assistance; 16 from Shirley and 12 from Lancaster. Administrative Assistant, Holly Ford, is conducting client intakes for the Housing Rehab program and is verifying income and program eligibility for both programs. At least 22 one-on-one client intakes have been completed; the income verification process of 20 of these applications has been completed (91%).

Community Development Manager is now registered in DHCD's Grant Manager System. Client statistics are being compiled and projects are initiating.

The Community Development Manager is participating in the preparation of two regional CDBG applications for the towns of Winchendon and Ashby and the towns of Shirley and Townsend. The required number and format of public hearings and public forums have been completed. All public hearings were posted publicly. Seven of the fourteen MRPC employees are contributing to these two proposals.

### **6.3 TRANSIT DEPARTMENT**

#### **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 ongoing. There will be a delay for the substantial project completion to December of 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 Early 2017. 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 meetings with FTA, MBTA and the Engineers.

#### **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 are negotiating to resolve the pedestrian access issues. 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.

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

Work on the project is continuing along the Fitchburg Line corridor and South Acton Station. The double tracking work along the corridor has been completed and also the substantial completion for

the rest of the project (Signals, Bridges and South Acton Station) has been completed, with full completion scheduled for Early 2016.

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

MBTA Fitchburg Commuter Rail Line suspension of weekend Train service has been ended. Regular weekend service has been resumed November 28, 2015. MBTA has released on January 7<sup>th</sup> a proposed draft commuter rail schedules for both north and south side. Public outreach and comment process concludes on February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016. The Final schedules will be released to the public in April and will go into effect on Monday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016. Riders can participate in this public comment process in one of three ways: 1. Via the online and written survey tool which will be available from January 7<sup>th</sup> to February 12<sup>th</sup>; 2. By attending any of the eight public meetings; and, 3. Via email at [crschedules@mbta.com](mailto:crschedules@mbta.com)

#### **Westminster Bus Route**

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

#### **Athol / Orange Fixed Bus Route**

Staff continues to assist MART to develop a new bus route and bus schedule in the towns of Athol and Orange to shift riders from para-transit to fixed route service. The proposed bus route in Athol and Orange will serve residents and seniors of the two communities to be connected to Shopping Centers as well as medical and educational facilities.

#### **Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC) Bus Connection**

Staff continues to assist MART to develop a new Bus Route and bus schedule for Mount Wachusett Community College to connect the MWCC Compasses in Gardner, Leominster and Devens with Fitchburg and Leominster Cities Center.

#### **Lunenburg Bus Route**

Staff continues to assist MART on the proposed bus route to serve Lunenburg residents and seniors to connect to Lunenburg Crossing/Shopping Center, the Commuter Rail Station and Lunenburg Town Center.

Discussion took place regarding the proposed new Commuter Rail Schedule.

## **6.4 TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT**

#### **Baystate Roads – Complete Streets Workshops**

Baystate Roads has been scheduling and holding workshops on the Complete Streets Program and its benefits, eligibility and funding. Workshops have been scheduled in our Region in Devens on January 27<sup>th</sup>, Gardner on January 28<sup>th</sup> and Fitchburg on February 25<sup>th</sup>. The following is from the Complete Streets workshop flyer:

Complete Streets can benefit all communities - rural, suburban and urban! By attending this workshop, local leaders, decision makers, and consultants will gain a solid framework for planning and delivering Complete Streets locally. Learn how the Complete Streets Funding Program can help

you design and fund Complete Streets projects. After this training you will understand how Complete Streets can benefit your community.

Instructors will discuss the benefits a multi-modal transportation network has on public health and the environment. The class will build upon the guidance provided in MassDOT's 2006 Project Development and Design Guide and MassDOT's 2012 Healthy Transportation Policy Directive and supporting Engineering Directives.

Instructors will walk you through the Complete Streets 3-tier funding program to show you how all municipalities - regardless of size or location - can benefit. You will have an opportunity to grade a sample policy and learn about the Policy Development process. Lastly, the class will provide guidance on how to build a municipality-wide Complete Streets Prioritization Plan. Who Should Attend - Mayors, Town Managers, Planning Department Directors & staff, Bicycle and Pedestrian planners or coordinators, Zoning , Health & Planning Board members, Private Consultants (Engineers, Planners, Landscape Architects), Educators and Public Health Officials.

Attendance by one municipal official is a prerequisite for eligibility for MassDOT's Complete Streets Funding Program.

#### **Montachusett MPO Public Participation Plan (PPP)**

Federal laws and regulations require metropolitan planning areas to have a Continuing, Comprehensive, and Coordinated ("3C") transportation planning process that results in plans and programs that consider all transportation modes and supports metropolitan community development and social goals. These plans and programs shall lead to the development and operation of an integrated, Intermodal transportation system that facilitates the efficient, economic movement of people and goods. As part of these requirements, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) must establish a "proactive public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing involvement."

The Montachusett MPO (MMPO) is the responsible organization established to meet these standards in this Region. The Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) serves as staff to the MMPO and is charged with the development of these key documents and programs.

In order to ensure opportunities for any and all interested individuals to participate early and often in the transportation decision making process, a Public Participation/Outreach Plan (PPP) must be developed for the MMPO. The PPP outlines the process for public involvement in, specifically, the Regional Transportation Plans (RTP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and as well as any other major transportation study undertaken by the MMPO. The PPP outlines the process that the MMPO uses to reach out to persons identified under the regulations/laws of Title VI, Environmental Justice (EJ), Limited English Proficiency (LEP), Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) and as well any other traditionally underrepresented population.

A pre-Draft PPP has been developed and forwarded to MassDOT for review and feedback. Upon completion of this review, any revisions needed will be made to the PPP and the MPO will then release it for a 45 day public review and comment period. A completion time frame or deadline has

not been established at this time. Please feel free to review the pre-Draft and provide us with any comments or issues.

**Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) FFY 2016-2019 Amendment #1**

At the MPO meeting on January 13, 2016, the MPO reviewed a proposed Amendment #1 to the FFY 2016-2019 TIP that reflects changes to various Statewide funded projects in the Highway Element of the TIP and the addition of and cost changes to various projects in the FFY 2016 and FFY 2017 Transit Element. The Montachusett MPO then voted to release Amendment #1 for a 30 day public review and comment period. The comment period began on Friday January 15th and will close on Monday February 15th. At their January 20th meeting, the MJTC reviewed the proposed Amendment #1 and any comments received to date and subsequently recommended that the MRPC and the MPO authorize its endorsement at the re-scheduled February 17th MPO meeting. A summary of Amendment #1 is available.

G. Corbosiero moved that the MRPC has reviewed Amendment #1 to the FFY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and based upon this review of comments received to date and the recommendation of the MJTC, authorizes it Chairman to endorse Amendment #1 to the FFY 2016-2019 TIP at a MPO meeting scheduled for Wednesday February 17, 2016 at 1:00 PM at the MRPC offices. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

**Next MPO Meeting –February 17, 2016 at 1:00 PM**

**Next MJTC Meeting – February 17, 2016 at 7:00 PM**

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

**DOCUMENTS/EXHIBITS DISTRIBUTED AT MEETING**

January 26, 2016 MRPC Handout  
December 8, 2015 Minutes  
November 2015 Warrant  
December 2015 Warrant  
Frequently Asked Questions – New MBTA Commuter Rail Schedule  
Fitchburg Line Commuter Rail Schedule and Comparisons  
MBTA Letter regarding Public Hearings on New Schedule  
Baystate Roads Complete Streets Workshops Flyers  
Draft TIP Amendment #1 Memo  
Draft TIP Amendment #1 Summary  
Draft Public Participation Plan



## MRPC Meeting Attendance List

*Alphabetically by Community*

Name	M/A	Representing	Appointment Date	PRESENT	ABSENT
Johnson, Kyle	A	Ashburnham	7.2015		X
Hoyt, Roger	M	Ashburnham	7.2011	X	
Pease, Alan	M	Ashby	7.2001	X	
Stacy, Wayne	A	Ashby	7.2005		X
Knapik, Garrett	M	Athol	7.2015		X
Grosky, Mitch	A	Athol	5.2015		X
Callahan, Jeremy	M	Ayer	7.2015		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
Cormier, Joshua	A	Gardner	7.2015		X
Collette, Michelle	M	Groton	7.2015		X
Graham, Don	M	Harvard	7.2015		X
Wallace, Lucy	A	Harvard	7.2015		X
DiPinto, Mary Ann	M	Hubbardston	7.2015	X	X
Sheipers, Anita	A	Hubbardston	7.2013		X
Koivumaki, Victor	M	Lancaster	7.2000	X	
Prokoweit, David	M	Lunenburg	7.2015		X
Allen, Nancy	A	Petersham	7.2015		X
Telepciak, John	A	Phillipston	10.201	X	
Natrowicz, Kyle	M	Royalston	7.2015		X
Hardie, John	A	Royalston	7.2007		X
Widing, Sarah	M	Shirley	7.2015		X
Pineo, Michael	M	Sterling	7.2014	X	
Kilcoyne, John	A	Sterling	7.2014		X
Carroll, Charles	A	Templeton	7.2011		X
Shifrin, Laura	A	Townsend	7.2010		X
Fortin, Mike	M	Westminster	7.2015		X
Corbosiero, Guy	M	Winchendon	7.2011	X	
Cyganiewicz, Austin	A	Winchendon	7.2015		X

**STAFF PRESENT:** Glenn Eaton, Linda Parmenter, Brad Harris, Bobbi Jo Johnson, George Kahale, John Hume, Jason Stanton

**GUESTS PRESENT:** Mark Goldstein, MRPC Legal Counsel