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CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

January 29, 2026 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Virtual Meeting

Attending Officers	Attending Sub-Regional Delegates
Chair: Daniel Schur, Westborough	North: Otto Lies, Holden
Vice Chair: Robert Hassinger, Grafton	Southwest: William Trifone, Dudley
Clerk: Timothy H. Wheeler, Berlin (7:04pm)	Northeast: Julianne Hirsh, Northborough
Treasurer: Andrew Coles, Auburn	Southeast: Mary Bulso, Blackstone (7:04pm)
Asst. Treasurer: Howard Drobner, Boylston	
Staff:	Not In Attendance:
Janet A. Pierce, Executive Director	Central City: David Quiroa, Worcester
Sujatha Krishnan, Dep. Dir., Transportation	West: Jared Grigg, Spencer
Trish Settles, Dep. Dir., RCCP	Asst. Clerk, Barur Rajeshkumar, West Boylston
Stephanie Toupin, Dep. Dir., Administration	
Dara Griswold, Finance Manager	
Sherrie Haber, Executive Assistant	

Call to Order:

Chair Schur called the January 29, 2026, Executive Committee meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with a roll call to establish a quorum.

Approval of Minutes-

Motion: to accept the minutes of the December 18, 2025, Executive Committee Meeting. Made by Mr. Hassinger, seconded by Mr. Trifone. Roll Call vote. **Motion Unanimously Approved with abstentions by Mr. Schur and Dr. Coles**

Public Comment:

None.

Executive Director's Report:

- **Administration (Janet Pierce)**
 - Retirement legislation was discussed at the MARPA meeting. Both bills have moved out of Ways and Means.
 - Government Budget highlights
 - DLTA was level funded at \$3 million

- Chapter 90 funding - 4 years at \$1.2 billion. The same formula was used with \$200 million the usual amount and the extra \$100 million based on road miles. This could help rural communities.
- Community Compact level funded at \$2 million
- 40A notifications can now be sent electronically which will save money and delays
- Drivers license suspensions have been ended due to money owed (such as excise tax due to the town)
- Supplemental Budget
 - Microtransit \$15 million
 - RTA grants \$10 million
 - Unpaved road projects \$7 million
 - Tax credit for food security for farmers donating to non-profit organizations
- Questions
 - Mr. Schur asked if the Accelerated Bridge project is beyond Chapter 90. Ms. Pierce confirmed. Ms. Krishnan added that generally MassDOT goes by the inspection list and they may provide funding for municipal bridges.
 - Ms. Bulso asked for clarification that the farmers receive the tax credit and Ms. Pierce confirmed. She asked if non-profit organizations who grow food could also receive it and Ms. Pierce confirmed. Mr. Hassinger asked if there is a minimum donation for the credit and Ms. Pierce confirmed.
- **Human Resources (Stephanie Toupin)**
 - The Public Health Regional Trainer position is still open. The position requires inspection experience.
 - The new Resiliency Planner begins on February 9th and has MVP experience.
 - Working on ACA reporting for health insurance.
 - GIC announced an increase of 10.9%. Hoping it will go down to 6% increase but that would include plan design changes.
 - A new FSA vendor is likely.
 - Questions
 - Ms. Hirsh asked to clarify that insurance provided to employees would go up 6%. Ms. Toupin confirmed.
- **Transportation (Sujatha Krishnan)**
 - MassDOT and MARPA annual meeting will be tomorrow with a preview of funding. Anticipating the same 2% increase.
 - Safe Streets for all presented at the quarterly meeting with good breakout sessions. There are 4 public meetings coming up.

- Housing and Transportation study – Subregional meetings are complete. The consultant will write the suitability analysis. The data has been very useful.
- Vernon Connected – there was a sneak peek with the City Economic Development Council and there is new energy to see how it can transform the area. Although it is a Worcester project, it will have a regional connection impact. There is a lot of public outreach and promotion for the project.
- Community projects
 - Jeff and the transportation team have helped 7 communities with grants (Grant Central)
 - West Boylston Route 12 corridor study may be something to pursue. Connected the town with the WRTA to help with an area that is under construction.
 - Boylston had a request for help with an intersection. There is now a plan to convert a two-way stop to a four-way stop. MassDOT is helping and there is a 2-3 month turnaround
- Grants
 - Mass Trails
 - Northborough feasibility study
 - MassBike – Pedaling through the past
 - Community One Stop – maybe a regional trails study
- Route 146 Corridor study is complete. It shows the interchange at Boston Road and 146.
- **Regional Collaboration and Community Planning (Trish Settles)**
 - Grants that are being worked on include
 - Economic Development Planning Partnership Grant
 - Readiness or Resiliency Grant on High Risk Dams
 - Mass Bio – about industry transformation
 - Federal – partnering with MRPC, National Park Service on economic development in rural communities
 - Grants opening up
 - Community One Stop
 - Eco One Stop
 - Grant Central
 - Working with towns on
 - Leicester, Upton and Warren Zoning Bylaw updates
 - Dudley Master Plan
 - West Brookfield Economic Development Plan
 - Three master plans in the works including Oxford, West Boylston & Uxbridge
 - Working on a culvert grant – Ms. Krishnan’s team is taking the lead

- Doing a lot of work with other RPAs including MAPC, Merrimack, MRPC & NMCOG
- The Rural Policy Advisory Commission is updating the rural policy plan to make sure it aligns with our region.
- Questions
 - Ms. Hirsh asked if CMRPC can help in Northboro as it is unknown who owns some of the dams. Ms. Settles said that she can help. They are focusing on high hazard dams as well as those with complicated ownership. Ms. Hirsh added that if a dam breaches and the owner doesn't know they own it and they are liable there is a problem. Ms. Bulso added that if towns have dams, they should fill out a form with Mass Historic.
 - Ms. Pierce added that Anne Gobi is looking at how to solve the problem in rural communities on how to manage grants. They are not being drawn down quickly enough or filing documents for reimbursement. She is looking for funding to help.

Approval of Warrant for Payment of Bills and Review of Financial Statements:

Ms. Griswold presented Warrant 26-07 for the payment of bills as required by Section 7, Chapter 40B, for the month of January, totaling \$262,829.46.

- **Motion:** to approve Warrant 26-07 for the month of January in the amount of \$262,829.46. Made by Dr. Coles, seconded by Ms. Hirsh.
- Roll call vote. **Motion approved unanimously.**

Committee and Sub-Regional Briefings:

- **Transportation** – Mr. Hassinger stated that the committee recommended safety performance measures.
- **Legislative Affairs** – Mr. Trifone stated that they have not met.
- **Physical Development** - Mr. Wheeler stated that they will meet March 5th at 6:30pm for the next round of DLTA allocations.
- **Personnel** – Ms. Toupin stated that the next meeting will discuss the Affirmative Action policy. It has come back from the attorney and will now be cleaned up.
- **SWCEDO** – Ms. Pierce stated that they meet next week.
- **Bylaw Review** – Mr. Trifone stated that they have met four times and are making good progress. The document is 17 pages and has not been revised in many years. The committee is 60-70% through and has gone line by line. It is unlikely that the committee will finish by March. He added that once complete it will need to be looked at holistically and then sent for legal review. Mr. Trifone referred to MGL Chapter 40B Section 4A that requires a 2/3 vote of the Commission and suggested that CMRPC approach the legislature with a change in a Municipal Modernization Act.
- **Sub-regional**– Chair Schur asked if there were any updates

- Mr. Drobner stated that there has been a slight increase in PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) of 1.6%. There has been no increase in past years. Ms. Pierce added that there is going to be a PILOT committee and the RPAs might have a seat. Ms. Settles suggested asking for a seat. Ms. Pierce will share as she hears more.
- Mr. Lies stated that the Planning Board and a subcommittee have identified potential sites for MBTA communities but it is an uphill battles. There will be a special meeting in February.

New Business:

- None

Adjournment: Having completed all business Chair Schur adjourned the meeting at 8:02pm.

Respectfully submitted by Sherrie Haber, CMRPC.

Documents:

- Minutes from December 18, 2025
- Warrant January 2026 26-07