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CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
February 26, 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	Central City: David Quiroa, Worcester
Clerk: Timothy H. Wheeler, Berlin	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	Southwest: William Trifone, Dudley
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 February 26, 2026, Executive Committee meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. with a roll call to establish a quorum.

Approval of Minutes-

Motion: to accept the minutes of the January 29, 2026, Executive Committee Meeting. Made by Mr. Hassinger, seconded by Ms. Bulso. Roll Call vote. **Motion Unanimously Approved.**

Public Comment:

None.

Executive Director's Report:

- **Administration (Janet Pierce)**
  - Ms. Pierce will attend DLTA day at the state house on Thursday and will present projects for CMRPC. Will hope to see the budget amended from $3 million to $4 million.

- There is a new state commission for PILOT (Payment in lieu of taxes). CMRPC will submit an interest to serve as the Commission is well poised to represent Central Massachusetts.
- The FY25 Audit is underway with new auditor (Grassi). Previous auditor (Roland) worked on a consultant basis to hand off to Grassi. Ms. Pierce met with Grassi yesterday and is hoping the audit will be filed on time but there may be a delay. Staff are uploading information as requested. In a best case scenario it will be presented to Executive Committee on March 26th for submission by March 31st. If it cannot be ready by the 26th a special meeting could be considered for March 30th.
- Questions:
  - Mr. Hassinger suggested adding the March 30th meeting now to make sure it is on the calendar. Mr. Schur asked staff to send an email asking for availability at 6pm on March 30th.
  - Ms. Hirsh asked what the intent is of the PILOT committee. Ms. Pierce stated that they would be looking at the formula comparing the value of state owned property in communities and considering why properties are not reimbursed at the same rate. Ms. Settles put links in the chat and Ms. Haber will send them via email. Mr. Drobner noted that the reservoirs are not listed.

- **Human Resources (Stephanie Toupin)**
  - The Public Health Regional Trainer position is still open and a part time Public Health Regional Trainer position has been added. She has received one application for each position and will be following up.
  - The new Resiliency Planner Emily Murad began on February 9th.
  - Ava Rivera was hired from Monty Tech to do graphic design for Princeton MVP. Ms. Toupin is looking into working with WPI as well.
  - Performance appraisals roll out in March.
- **Transportation (Sujatha Krishnan)**
  - The Transportation staff is in the throws of Safe Streets and Vernon Connected public engagement. They are looking to get to all 40 towns to discuss Safe Streets.
  - Attended announcement from Congressman Richard Neal regarding $2 million in funding for the Town of Oxford roadway rehabilitation project on Route 12
  - Grants include: MVP Action Grants, AARP Challenge Grant for Worcester, Health Grant & Community One Stop
  - Gearing up for TIP season with lots of large projects
  - Questions:
    - Ms. Hirsh asked if for Safe Streets CMRPC will be doing surveys or meetings. Ms. Krishnan replied that the subregional meetings are public zoom meetings and open to all. The individual community meetings will be a combination of people

(DPW, Police, Board members etc.) and can be in person or virtual. Mr. Drobner suggested that the delegates from the towns be included.

- **Regional Collaboration and Community Planning (Trish Settles)**
  - RCCP staff is also deep in grants.
    - Eco One Stop – 18 applications are going in and are due at the end of March
    - Community One Stop are due the first week in June. Having individual conversations with towns to see what they need help with.
    - DLTA proposals
    - CDBG – 9 towns
    - MTTA Grants
  - Events
    - MILUS meetings in subgroups. Kerrie Salwa is participating in Economic Development and Dani Marini-King is participating in Conservation
    - March 21st is CPTC at Holy Cross
    - March 12th is the Quarterly meeting with a presentation on Economic Development
    - CHAPA event
    - Legislative Affairs Breakfast
    - Blackstone River Summit on March 28th about water quality

Recommendation of FY 27 Budget:

- Ms. Pierce thanked the staff and especially Ms. Griswold for all her work on the budget. Ms. Pierce is comfortable with the budget that will be presented tonight.
- Ms. Griswold presented the budget for FY27.
  - Revenue presented as in the table attached. Anticipated increase of 5.64% to $6,677,468. The total revenue including pass through contracts is a 4.18% increase to $8,877,468
  - Questions:
    - Mr. Schur asked how close we usually track on Revenues – are we on target with what we adopt. Ms. Pierce replied that we are close and come in at 80-90% of projected. It depends on if CMRPC gets grant funds directly from the state or if they come from the communities.
    - Mr. Hassinger asked for a review of the Transportation numbers. Ms. Krishnan stated that the federal highway decrease of 1.1% is because last fiscal year they could dip into deobligated money but that ends in September. On Local, $446K was including the WRTA contract that we don have moving forward but there is bolstered grant funding that has partially offset. Transportation lost one full time employee last year and the position was not rehired knowing we would not have the WRTA contract. Mr.

Hassinger followed up asking who would do their planning work and Ms. Krishan stated that they hired a planning company.

- Expenses presented as in the table attached. There is an increase of 5.64% to $6,677,468. The total expenses including pass through contracts is a 4.18% increase to $8,877,468 showing a balanced budget.
- Questions:
  - Dr. Coles asked if the Insurance line covers required bonds for board members and Ms. Griswold replied that it does.
- **Motion:** to recommend the FY27 Budget to the full Commission. Made by Dr. Coles, seconded by Ms. Bulso.
- Roll call vote. **Motion approved unanimously**.

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

Ms. Griswold presented Warrant 26-08 for the payment of bills as required by Section 7, Chapter 40B, for the month of February, totaling $194,301.19.

- **Motion:** to approve Warrant 26-08 for the month of February in the amount of 194,301.19. Made by Mr. Hassinger, seconded by Mr. Lies.
- Roll call vote. **Motion approved unanimously**.

Committee and Sub-Regional Briefings:

- **Transportation –** Mr. Hassinger stated that they voted to recommend CMMPO endorsement of Amendment #4 to the 2026-2030 TIP highway project listing. Staff attended a meeting with MassDOT on February 3rd to discuss the readiness of project programmed on the TIP and gave a summary and discussed which projects were recommended to be pushed back in the development of the new 2027-2031 TIP. The committee reviewed the scoring of the 2031 candidate projects.
- **Legislative Affairs –** Mr. Quiroa stated that the Legislative Affairs breakfast will be held on March 27th at the Beechwood hotel in Worcester. Ms. Settles added that there is a good turnout of legislators and we will hear what they have to say about pending legislation. Ms. Hirsh asked if there is a specific topic. Ms. Pierce stated that the committee has identified priorities and will build that in if there are not questions from the municipalities. Ms. Hirsh added that there is interest in discussing health insurance increases and Ms. Settles added the education budget.
- **Physical Development -** Mr. Wheeler stated that staff has sent out solicitations for DLTA and the committee will meet March 5th to allocate remaining funds.
- **Personnel –** Ms. Toupin stated that staff are internally working on EEO/AA and the committee hopes to meet in March.
- **SWCEDO –** Ms. Pierce stated that they met this month to discuss EDA funding. This included Partnership Planning grant (letter of support sent), Application for 2025

Disaster supplemental funding and CDL workforce development application. The Annual Meeting is in June and all are welcome to attend. Ms. Bulso asked if CDL is only for commercial or if municipalities count. Ms. Pierce stated it is for all. Mr. Hassinger asked about the dam study and how broad it will be. Ms. Pierce stated that it is to identify ownership and mapping. Ms. Settles added that it will also narrow down dams by hazard classifications and the look at high hazard dams or those with difficult ownership. Ms. Bulsto added that dams need historic permitting before work can be done. Ms. Hirsh asked if the owner is known if they have to prove they have insurance. Ms. Settles stated that not everyone has what is required and in some cases owners are not known.

- **Bylaw Review –** Mr. Schur stated that Mr. Trifone has indicated that the Committee will need to push out the date. Although they had hoped to complete for vote at the June meeting it will likely need to wait until September. Mr. Schur will ask for a vote to extend at the March executive committee meeting.
- **Nominating Committee –** Ms. Pierce stated that the usual process is that we ask for volunteers at the March quarterly meeting and the Chair would appoint the members. The bylaws indicate that the committee should be appointed by the first week of March. Mr. Wheeler suggested appointing the Executive Committee and adding others at the quarterly meeting. Mr. Hassinger agreed. Mr. Schur stated that he appoints the Executive Committee to act as a Nominating Committee and will ask for additional volunteers at the March Quarterly meeting.
- **Sub-regional–** Chair Schur asked if there were any updates
    - Mr. Hassinger stated that they will be looking for another override at town meeting.
    - Mr. Wheeler stated that Wheeler dam is privately owned and is an exciting project. It will be a good approach for other towns to consider. Also, the Town Administrator's last day will be Friday and an interim will start next week.
    - Mr. Schur was asked the status of the theater and stated that it will be converted to a Hindu temple.
    - Mr. Lies stated that Holden is being sued over the MBTA law and there is a town meeting next Monday.
    - Mr. Drobner stated that their part time town accountant is leaving on April 30th. They are looking for a temporary fill in then will be looking to hire someone full time.

New Business:

- None

Adjournment: Having completed all business Chair Schur adjourned the meeting at 8:37pm**.**

Respectfully submitted by Sherrie Haber, CMRPC.

Documents:

- Minutes from January 29, 2025
- Warrant February 2026 26-08
- FY 27 Budget – Revenue
- FY 27 Budget – Expenses