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CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

March 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	Southwest: William Trifone, Dudley
Staff:	Not In Attendance:
Janet A. Pierce, Executive Director	West: Jared Grigg, Spencer
Sujatha Krishnan, Dep. Dir., Transportation	Asst. Clerk, Barur Rajeshkumar, West Boylston
Trish Settles, Dep. Dir., RCCP	
Stephanie Toupin, Dep. Dir., Administration	
Dara Griswold, Finance Manager	
Sherrie Haber, Executive Assistant	

Call to Order:

Chair Schur called the March 26, 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 February 26, 2026, Executive Committee Meeting. Made by Mr. Hassinger, seconded by Mr. Quiroa. Roll Call vote. **Motion Unanimously Approved.**

Public Comment:

None.

Executive Director's Report:

- **Administration (Janet Pierce)**
 - The quarterly meeting was well attended with a presentation and discussion on Economic Development.
 - The Legislative Affairs Breakfast will be tomorrow at 8am at Beechwood Hotel. The legislators will have the floor to discuss the budget and current legislation.

- The Vernon Connected event at JMAC was very well attended with over 175 people. Jeff Speck drew a large crowd including boy scouts working on their citizenship badge. Kudos to the Transportation team, Anthony, Yahaira, Nate and Sherrie.
- Thanks to Rob on all the Safe Streets town meetings. It's a great opportunity to touch base with all our communities.
- The audit draft has not been received yet so we will likely not need the meeting on Monday. The audit will not meet the March 31st deadline to the clearinghouse. It will be alright but no one is happy about it. Roland is very disappointed. We are not the only RPA having trouble with Grassi. The team is new to RPAs.
 - Questions: Mr. Schur asked if there are any repercussions for late filing to which Ms. Pierce replied no. She added that they will test 20% of expenditures etc but now they will bump it to 40%. Mr. Hassinger suggested that Executive Committee draft a letter regarding disappointment with the late filing. Mr. Schur stated that if we get it before the end of April there should be a special meeting held. In response to Mr. Hassinger's question, Ms. Pierce stated that four RPAs are using this firm. Mr. Trifone stated that public sector audits are not as profitable & RPAs are unique so there is a limited number of auditors. He added that this is not acceptable.
- At the quarterly meeting it was asked if there was any excess revenue or surplus. There was a little over \$200K for last fiscal year not including OPEB liability.
- **Human Resources (Stephanie Toupin)**
 - Hiring: The full-time Public Health Regional Trainer has been hired and starts on April 1st.
 - Terminations: Tina Deater from Land Use and Comprehensive Planning as well as an RCCP intern.
 - Available: part-time Public Health Regional Trainer, Summer interns. Working with Holy Cross for a Transportation Data Collection Intern.
 - Questions: Mr. Schur asked the total number of staff, to which Ms. Toupin replied 58.
- **Transportation (Sujatha Krishnan)**
 - Following the Vernon Connected event with Jeff Speck, there was a design workshop. There were maps to see the history and the study area. There were maps to have participants show what they want to see in the area. They could also draw changes to the street layout. There was an AI station for generation of people's ideas. There were approximately 40-50 attendees. Next the consultant will go through the information and have 3-4 concepts. Following that there could be an economic impact study. It is great for the city to see CMRPC funding the study.

- Safe streets subregional meetings are done as well as 10-15 of the town meetings. So far Rutland has the most participants in the survey.
- TIP highlights – Rutland improvements at 122 / Pleasantdale and Spencer East Brookfield at Rt.49. These projects total \$20M. Currently there is money left on TIP and \$8.5M will go to Shrewsbury for a community project.
- With the new Federal Transportation, there is a new way to measure for the Unified Planning Work Program for the upcoming fiscal year. We have no deficiencies. There is a change in the structure of the plan and reporting so staff is making sure to adhere to the requirements.
- West Boylston has regrouped the transportation committee in town. Staff are putting together all transportation funding sources and how it relates to projects. If communities want to learn how funding can be used for local projects they should reach out.
 - Mr. Hassinger asked that this information be shared with T-Committee. Ms. Krishnan stated that could be done and suggested that a synopsis could be shared with Executive Committee as well instead of the usual update.
- **Regional Collaboration and Community Planning (Trish Settles)**
 - RCCP staff has been working on grants.
 - Eco One Stop applications were due today. Sixteen applications were submitted including: Blackstone River Resiliency Corridor, Dudley and Northbridge Master Plans supplemental, Upton, Warren Comins Pond Watershed analysis, West Boylston and Oxford Master Plans, Berlin Wheeler Pond Dam, Blackstone River Resiliency Corridor, Culverts in Douglas, Grafton, Rutland, Warren and Leicester, Grafton School Solar Storage design, North Brookfield Town Common
 - DLTA funding can be used to provide this grant assistance to the towns.
 - Community One Stop will use overhead dollars since there is no DLTA left.
 - The Rural Policy Advisory Commission met and is working on its plan
 - Ms. Pierce and Ms. Settles met with the Federal Funding Infrastructure Office.
 - MILUS is going on – it seems there is limited community engagement.
 - CHAPA held the policy leadership council.
 - FFIO released applications for Grantwell – AI for federal grant searches
 - Happy Factor Screening was Wednesday. There were several stakeholders there. A plaque for work on healthy aging was given by AARP.
 - Saturday is the Blackstone Watershed kickoff meeting.
 - CPTC was last weekend
 - Community One Stop applications are due June 3rd. We are trying to bring Paxton, East Brookfield, Rutland and Oakham on board. There are 2 workshops on April 9th and 14th.

- CDBG applications are due in April – staff is working on 4-5 applications.
- Partnering with MRPC for regional restoration best practices (watershed based).
- The Earth Day Team will be cleaning a vacant lot in Worcester.
- Questions:
 - Ms. Hirsh asked if Happy Factor will be at 19 Carter. Ms. Settles said yes. It will be next Thursday in Berlin at noon
 - Ms. Hirsh asked if there are any grants for privately owned dams. Ms. Settles said yes.
 - Mr. Hassinger stated that if AI tools are being used to review grant applications it would be good to find what the tool is looking for so we can check before submission.
 - Mr. Trifone asked to check the date for Happy Factor screening because he had an email that stated Wednesday rather than Thursday. Ms. Haber will look into it but the event is definitely Thursday.

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

Ms. Griswold presented Warrant 26-09 for the payment of bills as required by Section 7, Chapter 40B, for the month of March, totaling \$260,904.55.

- **Motion:** to approve Warrant 26-09 for the month of March in the amount of \$260,904.55. Made by Mr. Hassinger, seconded by Ms. Bulso.
- Mr. Hassinger noted that the sub-contracts has increased.
- Roll call vote. **Motion approved unanimously.**

Committee and Sub-Regional Briefings:

- **Transportation** – Mr. Hassinger stated that the committee voted to recommend to the MPO the approval of changes regarding moving the money as needed.
- **Legislative Affairs** – Mr. Trifone stated that the breakfast will be tomorrow at 8am at the Beechwood Hotel
- **Physical Development** – Ms. Settles stated that they met on March 5th to allocate the remaining \$59K in funds for 7 projects.
- **Personnel** – Ms. Toupin stated that they will meet in April for EEO/AA and update salary ranges and job descriptions.
- **SWCEDO** – Ms. Pierce stated that they will meet next week at 3pm. Ms. Bulso asked if the meeting is public as she would like to attend. Ms. Pierce will send the invitation.
- **Bylaw Review** – Mr. Trifone stated that the next meeting is April 1st and then the committee will need legal assistance. The committee is making good progress. Mr. Schur will write a motion for the next meeting to extend the committee until September.
- **Nominating Committee** – Ms. Pierce stated that she has not heard of any interest from other Commission members. Mr. Schur asked if anyone here is not willing to serve on

the Executive Committee next year. There was none. The meeting will be held on April 30th at 7pm with Executive Committee to follow.

- **Sub-regional**– Chair Schur asked if there were any updates
 - Mr. Schur stated that their town meeting was on Saturday from 9am – 8:15pm. Zoning changes did not pass and Mixed Use development did not pass. They will be buying a mobile command center for the Police for half a million dollars. There was a push for 16-17 year olds to be able to vote in town election and at Town Meeting but it lost by 3 votes. It was said that teachers could sway large groups of votes. It would also require a home rule change.
 - Mr. Hassinger stated that they are requesting a \$5M override over five years. It is the 3rd operational override.
 - Mr. Drobner stated that Boylston is looking at an override for the schools only as the town was within the 2.5% increase.
 - Mr. Lies stated that MBTA was voted down again and will be penalized by the state. Holden is going to get a lot of money from Worcester so that will make up for what the town will lose.

New Business:

- None

Adjournment: Having completed all business Chair Schur adjourned the meeting at 8:13pm.

Respectfully submitted by Sherrie Haber, CMRPC.

Documents:

- Minutes from February 26, 2026
- Warrant March 2026 26-09