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CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

July 30, 2026 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Virtual Meeting

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

Call to Order:

Chair Schur called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. with a roll call to establish a quorum.

Approval of Minutes-

Motion: to accept the minutes of the June 25, 2026, Executive Committee Meeting. Made by Mr. Hassinger, seconded by Dr. Coles. Roll Call vote. **Motion Unanimously Approved with an abstention from Mr. Grigg.**

Public Comment:

None.

Executive Director's Report:

- **Administration (Janet Pierce)**
 - CMRPC has advertised for a new auditor for the annual audit and two proposals have been received. They will be interviewed next week and Ms. Pierce will announce the new auditor at the next Executive Committee meeting.
 - Retirement legislation is moving forward as part of the Economic Bond bill. Ms. Pierce was asked by Steve Tremont what percentage CMRPC would be comfortable with and replied 5%. Mr. Schur asked what CMRPC is paying now and Ms. Pierce

replied only what our employees are paying, approximately \$380K. Mr. Grigg asked what this is fixing. Ms. Pierce answered that the state has been paying benefits without RPAs paying in. The legislation filed would exempt the 14 years. Mr. Grigg asked if the state would subsidize and Ms. Pierce stated that it would continue as it has been.

- Connie Mellis is retiring after 18 years with CMRPC. She has been part of the transportation team since 2008. There will be a retirement gathering for her on Monday August 3rd at 3pm in the Revere room at the Mercantile office.
- Staff are currently doubling up in cubes and there is office space available in the building on the same floor. Worcester type A space has only 2% vacancy rate. If CMRPC were to sublet the administrative side (suite 520), adding the new space would be an additional \$100K/year. Ms. Pierce would recommend Executive Session at the August meeting to discuss a possible lease. Ms. Hirsh asked if more staff can work from home. Ms. Pierce stated that there are other factors including workers compensation to consider and most staff partially work from home. Mr. Schur asked what the staff growth has been since moving into Mercantile. Ms. Pierce stated that it was built for 40 and we now have 60. Mr. Schur asked what the future holds. Ms. Pierce stated that it could increase on the RCCP side with expanded or new programs. It could be 9 people but most would work from home as they would be doing things across the state. Staff has grown much more than anticipated. Mr. Hassinger asked if we are better at finding work or there is more money to go after. Ms. Pierce stated that it is both, but moreso relationship building. Towns now come to us. There are more than 150 open contracts now. Mr. Hassinger asked how that compares with other RPAs and Ms. Pierce will look that up. Mr. Grigg asked how often people work from home and how many take advantage of it and Ms. Pierce stated that most have 2 office days and 3 work from home days and the majority participate. She added that many work in the field. Mr. Grigg asked if we can float desks and Ms. Pierce replied that they have considered a hoteling model. Ms. Pierce stated that some work 5 days in the office and some teams all come in the same day. Mr. Grigg asked how many square feet we need. Ms. Pierce stated that 8500. She added that the building has shared facilities as well including kitchen, conference rooms and nursing room that do not have to be included. The way the new space is now would not need to change so no build out costs. Mr. Grigg asked the cost now and Ms. Toupin replied \$132K/year. Mr. Grigg asked if we have considered buying a building. Mr. Hassinger stated that it they have but it is not a good idea. Mr. Schur suggested that it may be something to consider long term but CMRPC is not in the real estate business. The committee can consider the pros and cons but he does not consider it good timing if there is space available in the current building. Ms. Pierce added that some other RPAs own their buildings and do not

recommend it. Mr. Hassinger stated that the Commissions work is dynamic and buying is better for a stable situation. Mr. Schur stated that there will be an Executive Session to discuss next month. Dr. Coles asked that Ms. Pierce share background information before the session. Ms. Pierce will share layout and a summary of staffing. Mr. Drobner asked to include history of past location sizes.

- **Human Resources (Stephanie Toupin)**

- Open positions
 - Resiliency Associate / Principal Planner
 - Public Health Training Manager
- Salary increases have been put in place based on performance reviews

- **Transportation (Sujatha Krishnan)**

- There was an MPO meeting this month and a Worcester 2026 TIP project had to be pulled. There were a couple problems. Worcester State had a problem with construction impacts and there was community backlash that hadn't been realized until it was too late. The city would still like to pursue 2027 but they would need to show the MPO that it is a strong project. The MPO is hoping that the money will move to a Shrewsbury project. Mr. Hassinger stated that when he votes at the MPO he votes with the directive of the T-Committee and since this was sprung on them they did not get to discuss. He voted "present". This project was \$10m of the \$30m TIP. Mr. Grigg added that Worcester asked to pull the project. Mr. Schur stated that it is important to have buy in from the community and the city should do their due diligence. Mr. Hassinger stated that they may have to wait for future funding.

- **Regional Collaboration and Community Planning (Trish Settles)**

- Monthly, quarterly and end of year progress reports and invoices went out on time.
- Municipal Tribal and Technical Assistance is ongoing. As RCCP has discussions with communities they are also hearing other needs.
- The Rural Policy Plan is being finalized for release in September.
- Ms. Settles and other RCCP staff have acted as third party reviewers for proposals outside our region.
- There is a grant program called Build for Mass which gives flexible financing for infrastructure.
- MILUS will meet October 14th and is limited to 3 participants per region.
- Ms. Settles is starting to see the list growing with Eco One Stop projects
- Ms. Hirsh asked about Build for Mass and if it includes sidewalks. Ms. Settles stated that it is more for water / sewer infrastructure. Ms. Krishnan stated that Grant Central could be considered for sidewalks. Mr. Grigg would also like more information on the Build for Mass program.
- A One Stop Housing portal is coming out from the state.

- Mr. Grigg asked if we are using AI tools to see if projects fit. Ms. Settles stated yes, that AI has been working well, but it still needs to have a human in the loop.
- **Finance (Dara)**
 - Ms. Griswold presented Warrant 26-12a for the payment of bills as required by Section 7, Chapter 40B, for the month of June, totaling \$563,298.47. This is to finalize FY26.
 - **Motion:** to approve Warrant 26-12a for the month of June in the amount of \$563,298.47. Made by Mr. Hassinger, seconded by Dr. Coles. Roll call vote.
Motion approved unanimously.
 - Ms. Griswold presented Warrant 27-01 for the payment of bills as required by Section 7, Chapter 40B, for the month of June, totaling \$19,101.39. This is to finalize FY26.
 - **Motion:** to approve Warrant 27-01 for the month of June in the amount of \$19,101.39. Made by Mr. Hassinger, seconded by Dr. Coles. Roll call vote.
Motion approved unanimously.
 - Ms. Griswold presented the Cash Report for June 2026
 - Beginning Balance: \$576,895.41. Ending Balance: \$2,471,300.54
 - Mission Square Funds: Beginning Balance \$1,171,375.06. Ending Balance \$1,298,178.10
 - Mr. Schur stated that this report is for informational purposes and does not require a vote. Ms. Griswold stated that this report will be included from now on.

Executive Session

- **Motion:** to allow Ms. Toupin to attend Executive Session. Made by Mr. Grigg seconded by Ms. Hirsh. Roll call vote. **Motion approved unanimously.**
- **Motion:** to enter executive session under the provisions of MGL Chapter 30A Section 21(A), part 2 to discuss strategy with respect to contract negotiation with nonunion personnel (Executive Director), to return to public session. Made by Mr. Grigg seconded by Mr. Hassinger. Roll call vote. **Motion approved unanimously.**
- The committee entered Executive Session at 8:07pm and returned at 8:24pm.

Executive Director contract

- Mr. Schur stated that Ms. Pierce's review will be voted on at the next meeting but the Executive Committee would like a contract in place
- **Motion:** to extend the contract of the Executive Director for one year with a 5% salary increase. Made by Mr. Hassinger and seconded by Mr. Grigg.
- Discussion: Ms. Pierce was surprised the committee was making this motion before the review. Mr. Hassinger stated that the way the contract is worded the procedure is

unclear. He does not think the review would change the result. Ms. Pierce suggested doing the review in July in future years.

- Roll call vote. **Motion approved unanimously.**
- Ms. Pierce thanked the committee and Mr. Schur offered congratulations.

Committee and Sub-Regional Briefings:

- **Transportation** – Mr. Hassinger stated that the committee did not get to meet before the MPO vote regarding the Worcester project.
- **Legislative Affairs** – no update
- **Physical Development** – Mr. Wheeler stated that the committee met to discuss the draft charge and consider expanding their responsibilities. There was also a change to add non commission members. Mr. Grigg asked if the final results can be shared. Ms. Settles stated that Ms. Haber will send the final draft charge with the minutes.
- **Personnel** – Mr. Drobner stated that a meeting will be scheduled before the end of August for the Executive Director review and the EEO/AA policy. Ms. Toupin added that the attorney has made very minor changes and she will send before the meeting.
- **SWCEDO** – Ms. Pierce stated that they have not met.
- **Bylaw Review** – Ms. Haber sent the draft Bylaws to the Executive Committee. Mr. Trifone requested that the committee send any comments or questions to Ms. Haber by August 13th so all concerns can be addressed at the August meeting.
- **Sub-regional**– Chair Schur asked if there were any updates
 - Mr. Drobner stated that Boylston is considering a debt exclusion for the fire station. When they started working on it costs were estimated at \$750-\$800/sq.ft. It is now \$850-\$900/sq.ft. leaving a big funding hole. They told the architects to continue but are hoping construction rates will drop.
 - Mr. Hassinger stated that the Grafton Planning Board and Select Board met. The Select Board suggested that something be done with data centers at the fall town meeting. They will consider a moratorium so there is more time to study the subject. Mr. Schur suggested looking at Northborough's bylaw.
 - Mr. Grigg stated that the Regional Dispatch will put out an RFP for building and for design services. Ms. Pierce asked if Sturbridge and Southbridge signed on. Mr. Grigg stated that Sturbridge did but Southbridge did not. They have had a shift on their board so it may change.

New Business:

- None

Adjournment: Having completed all business Chair Schur adjourned the meeting at 8:42pm.

Respectfully submitted by Sherrie Haber, CMRPC.

Documents:

- Minutes from June 25, 2026
- Warrant June 26-12a
- Warrant June 27-01
- Cash Report June 2026
- Executive Director's Contract