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CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

March 12, 2026 Quarterly Meeting Minutes

Attending Officers	Attending Sub-Regional Delegates
Chair: Daniel Schur, Westborough	Southwest: William Trifone, Dudley
Treasurer: Andrew Coles, Auburn	North: Otto Lies, Holden
Asst. Treasurer: Howard Drobner, Boylston	Northeast: Julianne Hirsh, Northborough
Clerk: Timothy H. Wheeler, Berlin	Mary Bulso, Blackstone
Asst. Clerk: Barur Rajeshkumar, West Boylston	Jared Grigg, Spencer
Attending Delegates & Alternates	
Steve Chambers, Auburn	Jeanne Scigliano, Rutland
Edward Castonguay, Blackstone	Shirley Shiver, Spencer
Chris Gorman, Brookfield	Charlie Blanchard, Sturbridge
Bob Beringer, Charlton	Michael Gagan, Sutton
Michael Derosé, Douglas	Wesley Stanhope, Sutton
Richard Clark, Dudley	Christine Watkins, Sutton
Jonathan Ruda, Dudley	Eli Laverdiere, Uxbridge
William Cole, Hardwick	William Macmillan, Uxbridge
Brandon Avery, North Brookfield	Thomas Klebart, Webster
Michael Baker, Northbridge	Jason Piader, Webster
John Eul, Oxford	Marc Frieden, West Boylston
Scott Peoples, Princeton	Caroline Regan, Westborough
Timothy Nahrwold, Rutland	Michelle Johnstone, Worcester
Guests	
Olivia Antonson, Dudley	Jeannie Hebert, Blackstone Valley
Bob Minarik, Douglas	David George, Holden
Frank Lopriore, West Boylston	Chris Lyon, USDA
Chris Starczewski, Dudley	Lyndon Nichols, USDA
John Jovan, Southbridge	Krista McNeil
Trevor Beauregard, Boylston	
Staff	
Janet A. Pierce, Executive Director	Connie Mellis
Trish Settles, Deputy Dir., RCCP	Sarah O'Brien
Sujatha Krishnan, Deputy Dir., Transportation	Robert Raymond
Stephanie Toupin, Deputy Dir., Administration	Jeff Howland
Dominique DuTremble	Connor Robichaud
Matt Franz	Rich Rydant
Dara Griswold	Kerrie Salwa
Sherrie Haber	Anthony Senesi
Andrew Loew	

Call to Order:

Chair Schur called the Quarterly meeting to order at 7:03p.m. Quorum was established by registration check-in. Chair Schur noted that tomorrow is the anniversary of the Covid 19 shutdown. He also thanked all those who serve in the military and asked for a moment of silence for those killed in Iran.

1. Approval of Minutes:

Motion: to accept the Quarterly meeting minutes from January 8, 2026.

Moved by Andrew Coles, seconded by Mary Bulso.

Motion Unanimously Approved by voice vote.

2. FY2027 Budget

Motion: to accept the FY2027 Budget with revenue of \$8,877,468, expenses of \$8,877,468 and assessments of \$200,557.

Moved by Jared Grigg, seconded by Andrew Coles

Presentation of budget by Dara Griswold, Finance Manager:

- Anticipated revenue is up by 5.64% before Pass-through Contracts. Assessments are up 2.5%. Transportation is down 9.91%. RCCP is up 14.79%. Expenses are up 5.64% before Pass-through contracts. Personnel is up 1.5% with a large increase in health insurance costs. Audit services is up \$25K with a new audit firm. Software is also increased by \$25K due to increased staffing and use of new software.

Discussion:

- Howard Drobner pointed out that the Executive Committee met to review and recommends this budget.
- John Eul asked if assessments are at 2.5%. Janet Pierce answered yes.
- Bill Cole stated that the budget is presented as balanced and asked how close FY25 ended to being balanced. Janet Pierce stated that the audit is being finished. CMRPC is looking at \$280K more in revenue than expenses with 96% of projected revenue. This does not include unfunded OPED liability.

Motion Unanimously Approved by voice vote.

3. Request for Volunteers

Chair Schur explained that the Nominating Committee selects nominees for the Executive Committee. He asked that if anyone is interested in participating in the Nominating Committee they contact him or Ms. Pierce. There will be a virtual meeting before the next Executive Committee.

4. Adjournment:

Having completed all business, Chair Schur adjourned the meeting at 7:15pm.

5. Overview of CMRPC Activities by Janet Pierce, Executive Director

- Welcomed the group to the Quarterly meeting and thanked them for attending. She thanked the Manor, Anthony Senesi & Sherrie Haber for organizing, Dara Griswold for preparation and presentation of the budget, and Trish Settles, Sujatha Krishnan and Stephanie Toupin for their work on it. She also thanked the Executive Committee for their recommendation of approval. She thanked Jeff Turgeon (MassHire) and Jeannie Hebert (Blackstone Valley) for attending as well as Chris Lyon and Lyndon Nichols (USDA).
- The Bylaw Review committee has been meeting every 3 weeks to update the bylaws. Commission delegate and alternate participation will be very important to have enough votes when it is presented for approval.
- Current regional plans include the following:
 - Vernon Connected – there will be a presentation by Jeff Speck on March 19th at JMAC in Worcester.
 - Regional Transportation and Housing Study
 - Safe Streets for All
 - Brownfields grant advisory committee is being created
 - Finalizing Imagine 2050
- Current grants include CDBG, Eco One Stop and Community One Stop. CMRPC staff is also available to help with grant administration.
- Upcoming events to register for:
 - Legislative Affairs breakfast March 27th at 8am
 - Annual Meeting & Awards Dinner June 11th

6. Presentation on Economic Development by Kerrie Salwa, Director of Economic Development

- Economic Development in Massachusetts is a strategic, collaborative process aimed at fostering business growth, creating high-quality jobs, and enhancing prosperity for residents and communities across the Commonwealth. It focuses on building, connecting and leading through investments in housing, infrastructure, innovation and workforce development.
- CMRPC offers the following services: Brownfields assistance, Town-wide economic development plans, Village center plans, Ecotourism plans, Priority development areas, Permitting guides, Economic development master plan chapters, Grant writing
- Project highlights include: 43D Leicester Permitting Guide, 5 Village plans, Rutland Heights Redevelopment, Small Business Incubator, Regional Infrastructure Plan, Milltown Caucus, Greentech Park Infrastructure, Digital Equity
- Projects looking ahead include: EDA FY'25 Disaster Funds: High Hazard Dam Impact, Priority Development Center Studies, Exploring Quabbin Regional School District Agriculture Programming, Brownfields Assessment Coalition Funding

- Central Mass Partners include Discover Central Massachusetts, 495/MetroWest Partnership, Worcester Business Development Corporation, Blackstone Watershed Collaborative, Central Mass Grown, MBI
- Trends: Development sprawl moving into Central Massachusetts with growth in median single-family home sale prices.
- Compass Rail is planning for expansion through 2045 with round trips from Springfield to: Albany (3 trips), Greenfield (4 trips), New Haven, (8 trips), Boston (6 trips)
- The Mass Rail Trail goes horizontally across the state and then connects to other trails. There is need for accommodations and restaurants for hikers along the trail.
- Industry clusters include: Education, Medicine, Life Science / Bio, Advanced manufacturing, Hospitality / Tourism, Climate technology & Agriculture.
- State partners include: Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, MassHire, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Massachusetts Association of Region Planning Agencies, Mass Department of Transportation, Mass Development, DCR, Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency, Massachusetts office of Outdoor Recreation, Office of Dam Safety, Office of Rural Affairs, Office of Business Development and Office of Economic Development.
- State Goals including Housing, Economic Development and Clean Energy & Climate
- The Southern Worcester County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy is updated every 5 years. The 2023-2028 goals focus on Workforce/ Education, business support, quality of life, marketing Central Massachusetts, Municipal Capacity / Regional Collaboration, responsible development.
- Federal Projects from Economic Development Administration include: High Hazard Dam Infrastructure Impact Study, Public Works / Economic Adjustment Assistance Program for CDL training, BiotechII ScaleOut Renovation Project. Brownfield Coalition Assessment Program is through the Environmental Protection Agency.
- MILUS is the Massachusetts Integrated Land Use Strategy. It is a state-wide land use plan to balance major state objectives.
- Ms. Salwa asked the attendees to write down projects that they might incorporate in their own municipalities or ways that CMRPC could help with Economic Development. She answered questions and there was discussion on the pros and cons of battery storage
- The presentation concluded at 8:08pm

Documents:

Draft Quarterly Minutes January 2026
Economic Development presentation

Respectfully submitted by Sherrie Haber, CMRPC.