



1 Mercantile Street – Suite 520
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 www.cmrpc.org

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

April 27, 2023 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
 In-Person/Hybrid Meeting

Attending Officers	Attending Sub Regional Delegates
Chairperson: Barur Rajeshkumar, West Boylston	Northeast: Julianne Hirsh, Northborough
Vice Chair: Howard N. Drobner, Boylston	Southeast: Walter Baker, Sutton
Treasurer: Otto Lies, Holden	Southwest: William Trifone, Dudley
Asst. Treas.: C. Richard Williams, Rutland	Central City: David Quiroa, Worcester
Asst. Clerk: Robert Hassinger, Grafton	
Staff:	Not in Attendance:
Janet A. Pierce, Executive Director	West: Jeffrey Howland, New Braintree
Sujatha Krishna, Dep. Dir., Transportation	Clerk: Timothy H. Wheeler, Berlin
Dominique Dutremble, Principal Planner, RCCP	North: Douglas Martin, Barre
Diane Shea, Business Manager	
Matthew Deiulis, Administrative Assistant	
Ethan Melad, Associate Planner, RCCP	
Guests:	
Amie Shei, President and CEO of The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts	

1. Call to Order:

Mr. Rajeshkumar called the April 27, 2023, Executive Committee meeting to order at 7:30 pm with a roll call to establish a quorum.

2. Approval of Minutes-

Mr. Williams made a motion to accept the minutes from March 30, 2023, seconded by Mr. Lies. **Motion Approved.**

3. Vote to Become a Member of the Coalition for Safe Drinking Water:

- Ms. Pierce welcomed and introduced Amie Shei, President and CEO of The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts, who spoke to the committee on behalf of the Coalition for Safe Drinking Water regarding the potential of the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission joining as members of their coalition.



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- In Ms. Shei's introduction, they noted the lack of regulations regarding private wells in Massachusetts and the importance of inspecting and renovating private wells to eliminate contaminants such as PFAS, arsenic, radon, uranium, etc. They then quickly provided some solutions including statewide minimum standards and suggested how the Coalition would work to implement them. Following this, they opened it up to the committee for questions and discussion.
- Mr. Hassinger took the opportunity to ask for clarification on the Coalition's focus, asking primarily if they were looking at residential homes and why. To this, Ms. Shei reiterated that they would indeed be looking at residential private wells as there are no measures or laws that guide homeowners as to how their wells should be managed.
- Mr. Lies then asked for clarification of the Coalition's role within the state government, specifically would they be filing legislation and were they seeking our support. Ms. Shei noted that they are not directly connected to the government and would only function in a support role for legislation.
- Ms. Dutremble, who attended the meeting in place of Ms. Settles, asked if there were any other states that have similar initiatives and is there a precedent. Ms. Shei confirmed that there are other states, noting New Jersey as a prime example, as well as other states exploring similar initiatives to address PFAS and other dangers.
- Mr. Melad, who sat in on the presentation, asked if the legislation that the Coalition is advocating for has specific parameters for regulation or just recommendations as to how it could be regulated. Ms. Shei said that the legislation would expand regulations to towns that do not currently have any regulations and the Coalition's goal is to standardize testing and monitoring.
- Ms. Hirsh built off the last question, asking whether the towns' boards of health would then administer the regulations or would there be state oversight. Ms. Shei confirmed that it would be like *Title 5*.
- Mr. Quiroa asked about the cost to residents for well maintenance following regulations. Ms. Shei noted that it ranges depending on the contaminant, from a simple \$100 filter on a faucet to address some impurities to around \$5,000 to address PFAS. Furthermore, she confirmed that there currently are some grants available for low-income homes, but legislation would expand these options to community block grants.



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- Mr. Drobner asked Ms. Shei about their engagement with the other RPAs and if others had signed on. Ms. Shei noted that they have spoken with folks at MAPC and FRCOG but are in the early stages of talking to other RPAs.
- Mr. Drobner made a motion to vote for CMRPC's possible membership of the Coalition for Safe Drinking Water, seconded by Mr. Quiroa. **Motion failed.**
- The committee thanked Ms. Shei for their presentation and she in return thanked the committee for their time and consideration. Ms. Pierce then invited Ms. Shei to join her at a future Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies (MARPA) meeting to present and discuss their cause with an audience of RPAs throughout the state. The conversations closed with a discussion from the committee as to how the Coalition could better present their cause.

4. Public Comment:

None.

5. Executive Director's Report:

a. Staffing and Administration

- Ms. Pierce began with an update on the Western Massachusetts Rail Commission- of which CMRPC has a seat. She noted, two meetings were announced for May 18th- one will be at Worcester State at 10 am and the other will be held in Natick and the More Institute Library at 2pm- and are going to be the last two needed to fulfil what needs to be done through the legislation- they will address governance of the rail line, logistical concerns and the stops that will be made. Ms. Pierce noted she will forward an invitation to the committee following the meeting. Additionally, she invited Ms. Krishna to add any comments- as Ms. Krishna has also attended previous meetings in place of Ms. Pierce. Here, Ms. Krishna noted that at the previous meeting in Springfield, residents of both Springfield and Palmer were advocating for a train stop to be placed in their area- which has also been a noticeable request seen from public outreach for the Long-Range Transportation Plan in the communities Southwest and West of Worcester.
- Ms. Pierce continued with her report and noted some staffing changes. She began by noting that there are four (4) potential interns that CMRPC will be extending offers to and that will work in the RCCP department for the summer.



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Additionally, there are four (4) to six (6) open positions that are currently being advertised or will be soon. Furthermore, to attract more candidates, CMRPC has expanded their search to all New England states.

- Ms. Pierce closed her report by first thanking the committee for their efforts to accept the audit, which was filed on March 31st on a timely basis as it enabled CMRPC to continue assisting their communities and to apply for grants. Ms. Pierce then noted that the *Climate Pollution Reduction Grant* letters of support outreach is underway, and the application is due May 28th. Furthermore, Ms. Pierce is going to meet with the Northeast Connecticut Council of Governments (NECCOG) Friday, April 28 because their region falls under the Worcester, MA - CT Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) that CMRPC is in. Additionally, CMRPC will be meeting with SRRPED and MAPC to come to agreement on which edge communities will be included in which RPA's application. SRRPED will be the lead agency on the Rhode Island MSA and the communities in their Region, and MAPC will cover 188 communities in the MSA that largely includes MAPC but also part of other RPAs and some communities in Southern New Hampshire.
- Ms. Pierce then opened the floor for questions from the committee. Ms. Hirsh took the opportunity to ask for clarification as to what the grant would enable. Ms. Pierce responded by explaining that it will include four (4) years of broad community engagement, analysis, modeling and project identification with some project implementation. Furthermore, there will likely be efforts that target reduction of vehicle emissions, energy efficiency, greenhouse gas reduction tools such as increasing trees. Ms. Krishnan added that because Worcester is in the top 60 most populated MSAs, CMRPC is eligible for the \$1million non-competitive grant for four (4) years. The first two (2) years will be spent formulating action plans and finding areas of need for projects and the last two (2) are for implementation. Furthermore, following the first two (2) years CMRPC would be eligible to apply for a larger net of grants that could add up to billions of dollars in funds.

b. Transportation:

Sujatha Krishna, Deputy Director of Transportation, gave their report.

- Ms. Krishna began their report by noting that the Transportation Improvement Program was released for public review and comment in the previous week.



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- Furthermore, she noted there is a public meeting set for May 8th and any towns that are wondering about the status of their projects are welcome to reach out then or via email for clarification.
- Ms. Krishna continued with updates on projects- here she noted: staff are adding the finishing touches to the Unified Planning Work Programs- which will be released in May; Transportation will be releasing their Long-Range Transportation Plan in June; the survey portion of the North County Health District Transit study for the Quabbin region is complete- staff collected over 200 surveys throughout area and they are currently sorting through the surveys in order to prepare for a public session in May to expand the community input to hone in on transit needs, funding mechanisms, etc.; Staff were invited to a meeting with the town of Sutton and the surrounding communities in the Blackstone Valley to discuss a variety of issue with the primary concern being distribution centers and how they affect land use developments and subsequent traffic concerns- particularly with Route 149 and Boston Road in Sutton and how MassDOT can make design changes based on CMRPC traffic mapping.
 - Ms. Krishnan then reiterated and expanded on Ms. Pierce's earlier staffing update. Here she noted, there are currently one full time position and two internships open. Unfortunately, no applications have come through for either internship- but Ms. Krishnan and Ms. Settles have recently met with the head of the planning department head at Clark University with hopes of establishing a Transportation curriculum and possibly a pipeline for students to apply for internships or fulltime positions with CMRPC.
- c. Regional Collaboration and Community Planning:**
Principal Planner, Dominique Dutremble, gave the update in place of Deputy Director Trish Settles.
- Ms. Dutremble began their report by reiterating and expanding on Ms. Pierce's staffing updates. She noted a position to assist with Community Development Block Grants has been advertised; Will Talbot, who has been an intern with RCCP for the last year will be brought on as a full-time assistant planner on June 1st; Associate Economic Development Planner Ryan Saul will be leaving in the early summer to pursue a law degree. A job posting is out to fill that position. Job descriptions are being crafted for a resiliency planner and a comprehensive and



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land use planner. Interviews are being performed for the regional housing coordinator and a public health training manager. Staff have performed tabling outreach at Clark and Worcester State University and plan to attend career fairs at WPI. Seth Peters from Homeland Security is reviewing potential Cyber-Security Interns.

- Ms. Dutremble continued by updating the committee on District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA). She reported that the quarterly report of 25 projects was recently submitted. In the first quarter RCCP expended 28% of the regular DLTA funds and 3.3% of the augmentation funds. Projects in the report included exploring opportunities with area, regional and national foundations. Team members have met the greater Worcester Community Foundation, Health Foundation, Sasaki Foundation, and AARP. Staff also met with several communities including Blackstone, Boylston, Brookfield, Charlton, Hardwick, Hopedale, Leicester, Northborough, and Spencer to discuss funding needs. Some current projects being worked on included helping Charlton with acquiring funding for a housing production plan and helping Sutton explore funding for housing development from Mass Housing for predevelopment project costs.
- Ms. Dutremble gave an update on resiliency planning. The resiliency team is currently assisting five (5) communities with their Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness and Hazard Mitigation plans. Staff are responding to Westborough's request for scope of service and cost estimates to develop their recently awarded a Hazard Mitigation Plan. Staff are working on Open Space and Recreation Plans for Dudley, Douglas, Oxford, Warren, Hardwick and Hopedale.
- Staff are in various stages of Master plans for Barre, Brookfield, Princeton, Spencer, Rutland, Mendon and Hopedale.
- Ms. Dutremble provided an update on active Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). Staff are actively working with Brookfield, Dudley, Leicester, Millbury, North Brookfield, and Warren on FY23 Projects. Staff are administering applications for Leicester/Barre, Brookfield, Millbury, North Brookfield, Warren and Dudley. We expect FY24 application results soon. We submitted five (5) applications.
- Staff are working on Statewide trail map with the other RPAS, a DLTA-funded Youth Trail mapping project and a MassTrails-funded Trail Accessibility Project.



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- The resiliency Green Communities (GC) staff are wrapping up the Green Communities DOER funded REPA projects. A new wave of competitive green communities grant applications are being developed for the spring round of funding. RCCP has active GC administration contracts with 10 communities.
- Ms. Dutremble provided the committee with miscellaneous project updates. Staff are also engaged in the following:
 - Working on an *EEA* funded build-out analysis with Grafton, Douglas, and Sutton;
 - Assisting Grafton with their *Complete Streets*;
 - Continuing with assessments and providing assistance with the Brownfields program which is set to close in September;
 - Assisting Grafton with an open space prioritization plan;
 - Assisting Charlton and Sutton with a Storm Water LID Bylaw;
 - Assisting Worcester on a variety of projects including a Land Use Audit funded through DLTA that will pertain to potentially using certain plots of land for urban forest or community gardens;
 - Wrapping up a MVP plan for Warren;
 - Working with South Central Charlton and Blackstone Valley shared public health services for their COVID-19 contract tracing service;
 - Formulating FY'24 work plans and budgets;
 - Facilitating fuel procurements;
 - Working on arts and cultural inventory;
 - Assisting with regional services;
 - Assisting on ADA plans for Millbury and Holden;
 - Preparing regional dialogues for town planners, Town Managers, and the Legislative Affairs Forum on housing equity in early June; are
 - Still looking to procure joint accounting services and have proposals for Hopedale, Mendon and Princeton;
 - Working to build a relationship with Worcester State University as they develop a Homeland Security Minor in order to attract potential interns and employees;
 - Looking into purchasing an active shooter simulator so that Homeland Security can provide training for a variety of demographics;



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- Wrapped up the Community Engagement Portion of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
 - Continuing their work on the Mendon and Upton Façade program and Princeton Eco-Tourism Plan;
 - Engaged in seven (7) active Housing Production Plans;
 - Currently working with 15 communities for the MBTA Communities Program;
 - Working with towns to characterize and understand the 146 Development Impacts.
- Ms. Dutremble closed with projects that are in the pipeline. These include additional Complete Streets Projects, several Open Space and Recreation plans and Hazard Mitigation Plan. We are also working on the previously mentioned Climate Pollution Reduction Grant; a Blackstone watershed 604 B Grant program; as well as 20 to 30 grant applications that will be submitted in the next month from the region for the Community One Stop for Growth program and the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Planning Assistance Grant program. Some of these applications will be developed by us for the communities to submit on their own.
 - The CMRPC website is set to launch this summer.

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

Business Manager Diane Shea presented Warrant #23-10 for the payment of bills as required by Section 7, Chapter 40B, for the month of April 2023 totaling \$110,798.47.

- Mr. Williams made a motion to approve Warrant #23-10 for the month of April 2023 in the amount of \$110,798.47, seconded by Mr. Drobner. **Motion approved.**
- Before the vote, Mr. Drobner inquired what the equipment software expenditures- that totaled just under \$5,000- were. Ms. Shea clarified that two software items were a membership upgrade for the *Survey Monkey* account and tool for social media data archiving and the equipment item was a device used for traffic counts.

The report of cash and the cash flow chart was presented to committee members, showing an ending balance of \$2,897,179.94.

7. Committee and Sub-Regional Briefings:



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- a. Transportation** – Mr. Hassinger noted the Committee met before the Executive Committee, where they recommended Amendment number 6 to the 2024-2028 TIP Highway Project listing and heard about the socioeconomic projections that are being used for the Long-Range Transportation Plan as well as financial plan.
 - b. Legislative Affairs** – Due to Mr. Martin’s tenure on the Executive Committee ending, there was no member present to recount the last Legislative Affairs Meeting.
 - c. Physical Development Committee**-Mr. Wheeler reported that the committee voted to support 9 projects over the two meetings, which will be utilizing the remaining ~\$80K in *DLTA* funds. Some of the supported projects included or pertained to *Grafton Open Space Prioritization*; the *Heat Resiliency Project*; short term rental impacts and historical preservation of Native American land.
 - d. Rural Caucus– No new Business.**
 - e. Southern Worcester County Economic Development Organization** – Ms. Pierce reported that the *SWC EDO* met at the beginning of April and no new proposals were presented at the meeting.
 - f. Sub-regional**– Mr. Williams noted that Rutland has a new Town Administrator.
8. **New Business: No new business.**
9. **Adjournment:** Upon a motion by Mr. Hassinger, seconded by Mr. Williams to adjourn at 8:41 pm. **The vote by roll call was unanimous. Motion approved.**

Respectfully submitted by Matthew Deiulis, CMRPC.