



1 Mercantile Street – Suite 520
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 www.cmrpc.org

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
 May 25, 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
Clerk: Timothy H. Wheeler, Berlin	Central City: David Quiroa, Worcester
Asst. Treas.: C. Richard Williams, Rutland	
Asst. Clerk: Robert Hassinger, Grafton	
Staff:	Not in Attendance:
Janet A. Pierce, Executive Director	West: Jeffrey Howland, New Braintree
Sujatha Krishnan, Dep. Dir., Transportation	North: Douglas Martin, Barre
Connor Robichaud, Project Manager, RCCP	
Diane Shea, Business Manager	
Matthew Deiulis, Administrative Assistant	

1. Call to Order:

Mr. Rajeshkumar called the May 25, 2023, Executive Committee meeting to order at 7:01 pm with a roll call to establish a quorum.

2. Approval of Minutes-

Mr. Williams made a motion to accept the minutes from April 27, 2023 seconded by Mr. Trifone. **Motion Approved.**

3. Public Comment:

None.

4. Executive Director’s Report:

a. Staffing and Administration

- Ms. Pierce opened with a reminder for committee members to submit their ballots for next fiscal year’s appointees. Additionally, she reminded the committee that the annual dinner will be on 6/8/2023 at Galliford’s Restaurant



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and Tavern at the Southwick's Zoo and noted a start time of 5pm with a cocktail hour.

- Pierce provided staffing updates. Effective August 1st Greer Jarvis will be transitioning from the Transportation department to the RCCP department to fill the recently advertised Resiliency Planner Position- allowing her to finish current responsibilities with Transportation. An advertisement for the Public Outreach Position will be posted soon. Additionally, 5 interns were hired, 1 for Transportation and 4 for RCCP.
- Pierce noted the following contract announcements: CMRPC's first digital equity plan was signed and awarded funding through Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI); Upton's Housing Production Plan was signed recently; a grant for the \$1 Million Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was submitted ahead of the May 25th deadline and feedback is expected to be returned sometime in June.
- Pierce noted annual reviews are in process and on schedule to be completed by the end of June MassDOT needs to approve the pay increases and these reviews will be completed by the end of May.

b. Transportation:

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

- Ms. Krishnan began her report by reiterating Ms. Pierce's previous staffing update and added that both she and Deputy Director of RCCP, Trish Settles, had met with a professor from Clark University last month regarding a possible internship pipeline into CMRPC. There is a student interested in the program and steps are being taken to bring them on as an intern. Additionally, there are ongoing searches for advertised full-time positions.
- Krishnan updated the committee on the transportation staff's move to the MassDOT building and noted that most staff have begun working at the new building. Additionally, the transportation staff's former cubicles will be available at the UNUM building for RCCP staff to expand into.
- Krishnan provided updates on projects. Here she noted: the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) update is completed; the long range transportation plan is wrapping up; summer traffic counts and data collection are in full swing in the east and southwest regions- communities were welcomed to submit requests; some



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potential projects that can be added to the future TIP updates were detailed; there was mention of several upcoming meetings with towns and MassDOT to discuss a variety of highway and roadway improvement projects; there are a number of town requests that are dependent on federal documents- communities were welcomed to reach out for updates or requests for help.

c. Regional Collaboration and Community Planning:

Project Manager, Connor Robichaud, gave the update in place of Deputy Director Trish Settles.

- Mr. Robichaud began his update by reiterating the previous staffing updates and expanding on them by adding that Ryan Saul will be leaving the commission at the beginning of June to pursue a law degree and his position will be advertised soon. Additionally, there are openings for a Community Development Project Administrator, Land Use Planner, Economic Development Planner and Cyber Security intern. There is promising progress being made to hire a Regional Housing Coordinator and a Public Health Training Coordinator. Tabling has been done at Clark University and at a jobs fair at WPI.
- Robichaud provided updates on current projects and potential or upcoming projects in the pipeline. He made special note to mention: the Barre open space and recreation plan (ORSP) is completed- progress is being made on ORSP's for several other towns and two towns are in the pipeline; Municipal Vulnerability Plans are progressing well for several towns; Hopedale's Hazard Mitigation plan is completed, staff are in progress on three other plans and a few towns are in the pipeline; the first phase of the State-Wide Trails Map has been completed and two other trails projects are in progress; there was a large increase in Public Health Excellence Grants for South Central Massachusetts and the Blackstone area and the Contact Tracing Grants were extended through FY24; staff are performing Community Health Assessments for CMRPC communities; accounting and fuel procurements are wrapping up; Evacuation and Critical Infrastructure Assessment project is in development; Southern Worcester County Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2023 outreach is complete and the narrative is in development; staff are wrapping up a couple of town façade updates; there are two planning studies in the pipeline; staff are wrapping up Housing Production



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Plans for several towns and have a few in the pipeline; Master Plans are being wrapped up or are in progress for several towns- with a few in the pipeline.

- Robichaud closed with some miscellaneous updates and noted: LPA status will be sent out shortly; the DLTA augmented funds have opened up new opportunities; staff have submitted 5 EEA projects; staff submitted Green Communities Competitive Grants for a total of \$475,000- of which ~\$20,000 would come to CMRPC for the administration.
- Robichaud opened it up to the floor for questions. Chairman Raj, Vice-Chairman Drobner and Ms. Pierce asked for an expanded explanation for a potential project in Boylston that Mr. Robichaud had briefly mentioned. Robichaud provided the plan's logistics and the classification of plans it would fall under and how it would be funded. The committee closed this section with a discussion about DLTA Augmentation funds.

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

Business Manager Diane Shea presented Warrant #23-11 for the payment of bills as required by Section 7, Chapter 40B, for the month of May, 2023 totaling \$108,577.53.

- Mr. Williams made a motion to approve Warrant #23-11 for the month of April 2023 in the amount of \$108,577.53, seconded by Mr. Quiroa. **Motion approved.**

The report of cash and the cash flow chart were presented to committee members, showing an ending balance of \$2,681,163.16.

6. Committee and Sub-Regional Briefings:

- a. Transportation** – Mr. Hassinger noted the Committee met before the Executive Committee. During their meeting, they were given a presentations on the Unified Work Program- and voted to recommend it by the CMMPO and the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant as well as an update on the Long-Range Transportation Plan.
- b. Legislative Affairs** – Mr. Trifone noted that the next Legislative Affairs Breakfast will be held on June 23rd from 8:30-10:30 at the MassDOT building on Pleasant Street. The meeting will pertain to the Central Massachusetts housing situation- there will be focused discussions on affordability, the impact more housing will have on local



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- social services and the elderly in the community. The committee were invited to register for in-person attendance if they haven't already, as there is limited capacity.
- c. Physical Development Committee**-Mr. Wheeler reported there was nothing significant that he could add- but reiterated Mr. Robichaud's previous comments about DLTA Augmented funds and the potential projects that could utilize the money. Mr. Wheeler commended the CMRPC staff for using the augmented funds to facilitate exploration into new grant opportunities that weren't previously pursued.
- d. Rural Caucus**- Ms. Pierce noted that the Caucus did not meet this month and instead took this opportunity to recognize Senator Anne Gobi on her recent appointment to Director of Rural Policy in the Governor Healy Administration.
- e. Southern Worcester County Economic Development Organization** – Ms. Pierce reported that the *SWC EDO* had a special session earlier this day to vote on a proposal from the Town of Douglas to develop a gravel pit into a large building with a water tower as well as improve roads and water capacity. Pierce noted that the organization recommended that the town wait until October since they have already had a grant approved by the EDA and they do not regularly award two grants to one community in the same fiscal year.
- f. Sub-regional**-
- Several committee members provided updates: Mr. Williams noted that Rutland lost their town planner; Mr. Hassinger noted that there will be a new planning board member- Jim Davis- for Grafton who will also become a CMRPC Delegate; Chairman Raj noted that West Boylston's Town election is upcoming and there were some people withdraw their name.
 - The committee then briefly discussed the sidewalk restoration that's being facilitated by MassDOT and the project was initiated.
 - Vice-Chairperson Drobner took this opportunity to share some troubles that West Boylston had encountered with researching the possible costs and measures needed to update or build a police station, fire station and senior center. The committee briefly discussed this and made suggestions. Chairman Raj took this opportunity to ask Mr. Drobner about an apartment complex development in West Bolyston- Drobner provided a detailed response and they briefly discussed the topic.

7. New Business: No new business.



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8. **Adjournment:** Upon a motion by Mr. Hassinger, seconded by Mr. Williams to adjourn at 7:47 pm. **The vote by roll call was unanimous. Motion approved.**

Respectfully submitted by Matthew Deiulis, CMRPC.