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 www.cmrpc.org

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
 June 29, 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	Central City: David Quiroa, Worcester
Clerk: Timothy H. Wheeler, Berlin	West: Jeffrey Howland, New Braintree
Asst. Treas.: C. Richard Williams, Rutland	Not in Attendance:
Asst. Clerk: Robert Hassinger, Grafton	Southwest: Vacant
Staff:	North: Vacant
Janet A. Pierce, Executive Director	Guest:
Sujatha Krishnan, Dep. Dir., Transportation	Daniel Schur, Westborough
Trish Settles, Dep. Dir., RCCP	
Diane Shea, Business Manager	
Matthew Deilulis, Administrative Assistant	

1. Call to Order:

Mr. Rajeshkumar called the June 29, 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 of May 25, 2023 seconded by Mr. Drobner.
Motion Approved.

3. Public Comment:

None.

4. Executive Director's Report:

a. Staffing and Administration

- Ms. Pierce opened by thanking Mr. Rajeshkumar for their service as the chair of the CMRPC Executive Committee for FY23.
- Ms. Pierce continued with staffing updates and reminded the committee that the Business Manager, Diane Shea's last day with CMRPC would be the day following this meeting. Ms. Pierce thanked Ms. Shea for her 3 years of service.



Ms. Pierce also noted that Joseph Ferguson will begin in the first week of July as the new Community Development Project Coordinator. Furthermore, RCCP has brought on a total of 4 summer interns.

- Ms. Pierce announced that she finished her final reviews earlier this day before the meeting and all Transportation promotions and salary increases have been approved by MassDOT. Ms. Pierce thanked the managers and staff for their efforts to get the reviews done in a timely manner as well as the Personnel Subcommittee and Executive Committee for their approving votes for the updated salary scale.
- Ms. Pierce discussed the staff salary increases and how CMRPC can remain competitive with the private sector as well as the Transportation department's move to the MassDOT building and the need to restructure the office space at the Unum building to better accommodate the needs of present and visiting staff. This discussion prompted Pierce to request that the executive committee revisit a conversation from Tuesday's Personnel Sub-Committee Meeting and deliberated whether the Executive director would need their approval for both how current office space can be better utilized to accommodate the growing staff and the hiring of a salary survey firm to facilitate a compensation study. Mr. Drobner provided a synopsis of the conversation from the Personnel Committee meeting. It was agreed that- given there was a budget for the expenses- Pierce had the authority to allocate the appropriate funds necessary to pursue a compensation study, adjust salaries and rearrange the office space independently, without the approval of the executive committee). Ms. Hirsh moved for the committee to make a formal vote to give Pierce assurance; Mr. Hassinger seconded the motion.
- Formal Vote to endorse the Executive Director's decisions relating to employee salary compensation and the current evaluation or CMRPC- Motion Approved with one abstention.

b. Transportation:

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

- Ms. Krishnan reported on the most recent MPO meeting and announced that the Unified Working Program was unanimously approved, and the Long-Range Transportation Plan draft has been released.



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- Krishnan continued with grant application updates and made special note of a large federal *Safe Street for All* grant- that is made available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law- which Transportation will facilitate with the help of MassDOT and a subcontracted consultant.
- Krishnan noted that CMRPC hosted MassDOT's Capital Investment Plan meeting for the Central Region and there was a good turnout.
- Krishnan provided staffing updates and noted that they have 3 open positions and are currently conducting interviews.
- Krishnan reported on projects. Here she noted: that Route 146 corridor study has been recommended to MassDOT and a decision will be made in July for its approval; traffic counts are being conducted in Berlin; a proposal for a development in Grafton is seeking MEPA approval and CMRPC will be providing comments.
- Krishnan mentioned that WRTA will be interviewing their finalists for the Administrator position the day following this meeting and a nomination is expected.

c. Regional Collaboration and Community Planning:

Deputy Director Trish Settles gave their report.

- Ms. Settles began with staffing updates and noted that Ryan Saul, Associate Planner, left CMRPC this month. Additionally, there are several open positions and there have been discussions with Homeland Security to hire an Emergency Preparedness Planner.
- Ms. Settles reported on the closing of several projects. She noted that the second quarter DLTA report is being finalized; the MVP project in East Brookfield is concluding and phase one of the State-wide trails map project with MAPC has been submitted.
- Ms. Settles noted that due to FEMA guideline changes, Hazard Mitigation projects will need to be adjusted accordingly- this will affect both on going projects and future projects.
- RCCP is waiting to hear back on the Community Development Block Grants applications submitted this past spring. These announcements usually come out late summer.
- Ms. Settles provided updates on recently completed, on-going and pipeline projects. She highlighted the many recent efforts to assist municipalities to obtain state and federal grants Also of note are the several active public health



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projects, the development of the CEDS narrative which will be drafted by August; LPA hours are being drawn down to zero and they will be reset on July 1st;

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

Business Manager Diane Shea presented Warrant #23-12 for the payment of bills as required by Section 7, Chapter 40B, for the month of June, 2023 totaling \$124,433.11.

- Mr. Drobner made a motion to approve Warrant #23-12 for the month of June 2023 in the amount of \$124,433.11, seconded by Mr. Williams. **Motion approved.**

The report of cash and the cash flow chart were presented to committee members, showing an ending balance of \$2,472,072.59.

6. Committee and Sub-Regional Briefings:

- a. Transportation** – Mr. Hassinger noted the Committee met before the Executive Committee. During their meeting, they voted to recommend an amendment to the CMMPO and voted to recommend to the CMMPO an endorsement of the Long-Range Transportation Plan 2050 Connections.
- b. Legislative Affairs** – Mr. Quiroa provided the update and detailed the last meeting where several experts on housing provided presentations on housing in Worcester and throughout the Central region.
 - Mr. Rajeshkumar asked if there were any conversations pertaining to state land and buildings. Ms. Pierce noted that this was a topic during the meeting. The conversation expanded into zoning regulations, land-use optimization, housing market and rising rent.
- c. Physical Development Committee- No news to report.**
- d. Rural Caucus**– Ms. Settles noted that the next Rural Caucus meeting is scheduled for July 13th and will pertain to Public Health- particularly, safe drinking water and public health care access. Senator Anne Gobi is expected to attend. Notices will be mailed out soon.
- e. Southern Worcester County Economic Development Organization** – Ms. Pierce noted that at the monthly meeting, the Town of Douglas presented a proposal for an EDA application- which the board approved. Pierce also spoke about the quarterly meeting, which featured presentations from both CMRPC staff on the CEDS as well as The Higher Education Consortium of Central Massachusetts (HECCMA) on how the area can retain students and better public transportation and transit. Pierce



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announced that the next quarterly meeting is in September and the next monthly meeting will be held on the first Tuesday of August, due to July 4th Holiday.

f. Sub-regional–

- Pierce talked about some of the CMRPC sub-regional community work. She highlighted the Brookfield Master Plan event at the Oakham Brewery- which was just one of the many community outreach events that CMRPC either coordinated or participated in to promote a variety of plans.

7. Executive Session – Vote to enter into Executive Session:

- The Committee agreed that it was not necessary for them to enter Executive Session, as the Personnel Board wishes to discuss contract logistics at a future meeting in July 2023 before entering into Executive Session with the Executive Committee.

8. Vote to Approve Executive Director’s Contract– N/A

9. New Business:

- Mr. Drobner took this as an opportunity to reiterate that he will be taking on the role and responsibilities of Chairman beginning on July 1st. Furthermore, he expressed interest in utilizing the conference room with all new audio/visual technology available at the new MassDOT building for future Executive Committee meetings, beginning in August.
- Ms. Hirsh inquired if there are any current projections for the revival of local retail shopping when compared to e-commerce. Ms. Settles answered by noting that it depends on the walkability of a given downtown, the types of businesses and which plans- such as the Local Rapid Response Plan (LRRP)- are being implemented by said town.

10. Adjournment: Upon a motion by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Howland to adjourn at 8:22 pm. **The vote by roll call was unanimous. Motion approved.**

Respectfully submitted by Matthew Deiulis, CMRPC.