

**CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

March 9, 2023 Quarterly Meeting Minutes

Zoom Virtual Meeting

<b>Attending Officers</b>		<b>Attending Sub Regional Delegates</b>
Chairperson Barur Rajeshkumar, West Boylston		Northeast: Juliane Hirsh, Northborough
Vice Chair Howard Drobner, Boylston		Southwest: William Trifone, Dudley
Treasurer, Otto Lies, Holden		Southeast: Walter Baker, Sutton
Asst. Clerk, Robert Hassinger, Grafton		
Asst. Treasurer, C. Richard Williams, Rutland		
<b>CMRPC Delegates and Alternates</b>		
Andrew Coles, Auburn		Thom Begin, Northbridge
Dwarakesh Nallan, Auburn		Sheryl Lombardi, Paxton
Todd Kirrane, Auburn		Ann Neuburg, Princeton
Matt Urban, Barre		Purna Rao, Shrewsbury
Joe Belrose, Blackstone		Jared Grigg, Spencer
Sharon Mahoney, Brookfield		Jeffrey Adams, Sturbridge
Jean Vincent, Charlton		Jesse Limanek, Sutton
Michael Jaquith, East Brookfield		Eli Laverdiere, Uxbridge
Sean Kowalczyk, East Brookfield		William Talcott, Sutton
Meg Haight, Hardwick		Daniel Schur, Westborough
Eric Vollheim, Hardwick		Pamela Harding, Worcester
Pamela Williams, Millville		Stephen Rolle, Worcester
Brandon Avery, North Brookfield		
<b>Guests</b>		
David Sullivan, Worcester Chamber of Commerce		Jon Weaver, MBI
Jeannie Hebert, Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce		Dianna Provencher, Leicester
Jennifer Warren-Dyment, West Boylston Town Administrator		
<b>CMRPC Staff</b>		
Janet Pierce	Sujatha Krishnan	Trish Settles
Wenzheng Wang	Connor Robichaud	Jane Wyrick
Ian McElwee	Diane Shea	Matthew Deiulis
Ryan Saul	Nahrin Sangkagalo	

**1. Business Meeting**

Chairman Barur Rajeshkumar called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. noting the presence of a quorum. Janet Pierce conducted a roll call of CMRPC delegates and alternates.

- **Approval of Minutes:** Charles Richard Williams motioned to approve the minutes from the Quarterly Commission Meeting on January 12, 2023. Bob Hassinger seconded the motion. The motion was approved by roll call vote, with eight (8) abstentions.
- **Vote to approve Fiscal Year 2024 Budget:**
  - Ms. Pierce presented the Fiscal Year 2024 Budget. Ms. Pierce first announced changes in the anticipated revenue report and made particular note of: the 2.49% change in assessment rates; 10.07% increase in the MassDOT budget; 21.12% decrease in the WRTA contract; 30.34% increase in state grants for RCCP; 350% increase in interest income; 6.44% increase in the CMRPC anticipated revenue; 133.33% increase in pass through contracts and a 14.63% total increase to the total revenue budget. The total budget being proposed total \$5,335,532. Ms. Pierce then presented the proposed expenses for FY'24 and noted: increases of 8.34%, 8.67%, 8.34% to salaries, fringe benefits and Medicare, respectively; a decrease of 87.84% in rent expense due to the newly adopted GASB 87, which created an amortization of leases item which totals \$112,953 and increased the interest payment to \$20,019. The proposed operating expense totaled \$4,635,532.
  - Ms. Pierce opened the floor for questions. Jared Grigg, of Spencer, inquired about the potential staff increase and Ms. Pierce responded by noting a projection of three (3) to five (5) new employees.
  - Charles Richard Williams motioned to adopt the Fiscal Year 2024 Budget. Eric Vollheim seconded the motion. The motion was approved with one (1) abstention and one (1) no-vote.
- **Fiscal Year 2024 Nominating Committee Volunteers:** Ms. Pierce made a short statement reiterating the need for any prospective volunteers to be on the Nominating Committee. Ms. Pierce noted that the meeting may have to be in person, but that will depend on an update to the *Open Meeting Law*. There were three volunteers: Andrew Coles, Daniel Schur and Jared Grigg.
- **Welcome and New Business:**
- Janet Pierce, CMRPC Executive Director, welcomed attendees to the virtual CMRPC March Quarterly Meeting. Janet thanked the attendees of the meeting for their support on the budget and FY24 annual assessments, as well as all the great municipal work that is performed because of these community partnerships.
- Ms. Pierce announced that the Annual CMRPC Dinner and Awards ceremony would be held on June, 8<sup>th</sup> 2023 at Galliford's Restaurant & Tavern at Southwick's Zoo. There will be a cocktail hour before the event and guests will be able to use the "Safari Skyride" to explore the park from above. All attendees are invited to explore the zoo prior to the Annual meeting between noon and 4:30 at a discounted rate. Furthermore, there will be discounted tickets available for purchase through CMRPC for a future visit. An invitation will be sent out soon.
- Ms. Pierce stated that the staff is expanding, and she is very satisfied with the progress being made on projects. Additionally, she noted before the COVID-19 pandemic CMRPC was looking into finding satellite offices to expand, but due to the pandemic this had to be put on pause. However, Ms. Pierce was proud to announce through negotiations with MassDOT, the Transportation staff will be moving into MassDOT's new Central

Massachusetts Transportation Center on Plantation Street in Worcester. Ms. Pierce invited the committee to tour the building once the move has been completed, which is projected to occur in April.

- Ms. Pierce briefly discussed the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) and CMRPC's past involvement and reiterated her announcement from the last quarterly meeting that CMRPC has been designated as an Economic Development District. Additionally, she noted this project's importance and expressed gratitude for CMRPC's designation as well as all for all the community representatives and guests present to participate in the panel discussion on the CED's. Before closing, she asked if there were any questions- which there were none.

**2. Adjournment of Official Business Meeting:**

Bob Hassinger made a motion to adjourn at 7:35 pm, Jesse Limanek seconded the motion. The motion passed by roll call with two (2) no votes, and the business meeting adjourned. The presentations and discussions continued off record.

**3. Presentations:**

Ms. Pierce invited Kerrie Salwa, Project Manager from RCCP, to introduce CMRPC staff and give a description of the Southern Worcester County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs). A variety of staff members from the Regional Collaboration and Community Planning (RCCP) Team provided a summary of the CEDs and its many facets as well as a review of the process for updating the CEDs and a Strengths Weakness Opportunities Threats (SWOT) Analysis of the region. The attendees participated in a lively conversation and gave a great number of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that are present in their respective communities as well as the region as a whole.

Respectfully submitted by Matthew Deilulis, CMRPC.