



Southern  
Worcester  
County  
Economic  
Development  
Organization

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Planning Commission  
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**Southern Worcester County Economic Development Organization  
Board of Directors  
Remote Meeting via Zoom  
February 2, 2023  
Meeting Minutes**

**Present:**

**SWC EDO Board Members: (Exec Cmte)\***

Janet Pierce, CMRPC\*  
Karen Pelletier, WRCC\*  
Jeff Turgeon, Central Mass Hire\*  
Dave George, Rutland\*  
Brad Kadelski, Brookfield\*  
Jeannie Hebert, BVCC\*  
Elizabeth Cruz, LABO\*  
Peter Hoffman

**Advisors:**

Lydon Nichols, USDA

**Guests:**

David Sullivan, WRCC

**CMRPC Staff:**

Kerrie Salwa, CMRPC  
Ryan Saul, CMRPC

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1. Meeting called to order at 3:19 pm: Janet Pierce called the meeting to order at 3:19 pm. Ryan Saul facilitated a roll call of the Executive Committee to note who was remotely in attendance. Due to an initial lack of quorum, the meeting began informally at 3:09 p.m. with agenda items three and four. Agenda items one and two were initially skipped.
  2. Minutes: Agenda item two was initially skipped until a quorum was present. Janet stated that the Executive Committee had to approve the meeting minutes from the January 5, 2023, Executive Committee meeting. Jeff Turgeon made a motion to approve the minutes from January 5, 2023, and Dave George seconded. Janet asked if there was any discussion. A roll-call vote of the Executive Committee was conducted. The motion passed unanimously.
  3. CEDS Update: CMRPC has officially launched the community engagement plan and the survey. Kerrie said CMRPC has been meeting with a variety of stakeholders, which has included a group organized by Clark University, CMRPC's internal staff, the WRBA, and Glickman and Kavago. CMRPC has future CEDS meetings scheduled with CMRPC's Town Managers and Administrators Meeting on February 9<sup>th</sup>, QCC's Academic Affairs Leadership Team on February 13<sup>th</sup>, BVCC's Legislative Breakfast on February 14<sup>th</sup>, HECCMA on February 17<sup>th</sup>, Central MassHire's WIOA

meeting on February 28<sup>th</sup>, and CMRPC's Quarterly meeting on March 9<sup>th</sup>. Kerrie said she is also working on coordinating discussions with Karen and the Chamber, with Central Mass Grown, with the Greater Worcester Community Foundation, and with the Rutland EDC on February 8<sup>th</sup>. Kerrie said that CMRPC plans on reaching out to other EDCs in other subregions as well. CMRPC has also begun pulling data using the SimplyAnalytics data program that was purchased through the EDA grant. Currently, CMRPC will be pulling 85 data points for the CEDS. More details about the data will be available at the March 17<sup>th</sup> EDO Quarterly meeting.

Jeff asked Kerrie if CMRPC is looking for other groups to speak to about the CEDS. Kerrie said yes. Jeff said he will try to set something up with the Career Center staff that meets virtually on Friday mornings, as it could be a good opportunity to discuss the CEDS. Janet asked if there were any other comments or questions. Janet asked Karen if there were any groups or areas that she feels CMRPC may be missing in its CEDS engagement outreach compared to the last CEDS. Karen said she would think about that further, but that she does remember reaching out to specific industry groups. Janet asked Karen what is most appropriate for the Chamber to discuss the CEDS with CMRPC. Karen said that the full staff meetings that are held on Monday mornings are likely the best venue. Janet said that she would also not want to exclude the Chamber's board from the CEDS process, since they were so involved in it last time. Janet also asked Karen about the process of the Chamber's Board approving the previous CEDS. Karen said that it was a very similar process to the way CMRPC is going about it now. Karen said that the Board meets Quarterly and that they just met. Kerrie said that the feedback from the engagement process will already be compiled by then. Dave George asked if the Wachusett Area Chamber of Commerce was aware of the CEDS. Kerrie said that they are aware and that Wenzheng Wang of CMRPC has reached out to the region's various chambers. Jeannie asked if Kerrie still wanted a few minutes to speak about the CEDS at BVCC's Legislative Breakfast on February 14<sup>th</sup>. Kerrie said yes.

4. Project Review: Kerrie said that she has no project updates. Janet asked the group if they are aware of any projects. Kerrie said that she would ask about potential projects at the upcoming CMRPC Town Managers and Administrators meeting.

5. Partner Updates:

- Janet Pierce: CMRPC will be holding its next Quarterly meeting on March 9<sup>th</sup>. The CEDS process will be discussed.
- Jeannie Hebert: BVCC is having its "Love your Legislators" legislative breakfast on February 14<sup>th</sup>. BVCC is also hosting a business after-hours tonight. There is a ribbon cutting at Spicy Waters, which is a distillery in Millbury. BVCC is hosting its expo on March 25<sup>th</sup> at the Northbridge High School field house. Jeannie also mentioned that BVCC is looking for questions for the legislators to be submitted for the legislative breakfast. She said if anyone had questions, they can email them to her. Janet said a question she has is if there will be legislative action taken regarding the remote meeting law expiring at the end of March. Jeannie said she would be sure to ask that question.
- Brad Kadelski: Janet asked Brad about the master plan update that is taking place in two

weeks. Brad said he is looking forward to it and that he hopes people will attend. Janet also asked Brad about the Finney Lot in Brookfield as it relates to brownfields. Brad said the problem with that lot is that it is still owned by the same ownership.

- Karen Pelletier: The Chamber is co-hosting the annual Economic Forecast on Tuesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>. On the same day, both the Clinton and Wachusett Chambers have events. On February 8<sup>th</sup>, there is a seminar on amplifying diversity, equity, and inclusion through organizational culture. On February 15<sup>th</sup>, there is a manufacturing roundtable. Registration for the Worcester Women’s Leadership Conference is now open. The event is on May 4<sup>th</sup>, but tickets always sell out.
  - David Sullivan: David said that the manufacturing roundtable is with MassMEP and its new president, Kathie Mahoney. Kathie has returned to MassMEP after some time in Rhode Island. The construction and real estate roundtable will be different from typical roundtables because it involves MassDEP and the EPA. The event will be focused on brownfields. David asked Dave and Brad if they were interested in going, as there will likely be a lot of municipal representation. David also said he hopes to get representation from the Southern Worcester County region, as there are already many registrants from the Montachusett region. David put both links to the events in the chat. Kerrie asked if the construction and real estate roundtable is virtual. David said no, but if there are interested parties traveling from far, he could likely set up a remote option.
  - Elizabeth Cruz: LABO and the Chamber are hosting a membership info event on February 7<sup>th</sup>. On February 23<sup>rd</sup>, there is a small business summit. On March 21<sup>st</sup>, there is a residential and commercial “lease versus buy” event with USDA. On April 29<sup>th</sup>, LABO is hosting the Latin Expo at the DCU Center. On June 6<sup>th</sup>, there will be a Spanish matchmaker roundtable regarding capital funding. In September or October, there will also be a Hispanic heritage matchmaker.
  - Dave George: Dave said that about a year ago, Rutland formed an EDC. The group has begun to get its feet under it and is working on a work plan. The EDC has identified some areas for improvement with the help of Kerrie and CMRPC. The EDC is also looking to get an Economic Development Coordinator position filled using ARPA funding. Dave said he would add the CEDS discussion to the next EDC agenda. He also said that ideally, there will be a CEDS discussion at some type of joint meeting with the EDC, the Planning Board, and possibly other boards and commissions. Kerrie said that the following month would be best for such a meeting.
6. Review Meeting Dates/Locations and Other Important Dates: Kerrie said the next Executive Committee meeting will be on Thursday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, at 3:00 p.m. The following Executive committee meeting after that will be held on Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, at 3:00 p.m. The next Quarterly Meeting will be on Thursday, March 16<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m. Kerrie said she leaves it to the board to decide if the Quarterly meeting will be virtual or in-person. Janet asked for the group’s thoughts. Jeff said that a hybrid option provides an opportunity to network and that he thinks it is a good idea if the logistics work. Karen said she agrees. Janet said that the next meeting will be planned to be in-person with a remote option. If the weather is bad that day, the meeting can be moved to fully remote.

7. Other Announcements: There were no other announcements.
8. Adjourn: Karen Pelletier made a motion to adjourn and Jeff Turgeon seconded. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.