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CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
 November 30, 2023 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
 In-Person/Hybrid Meeting

Attending Officers	Attending Sub Regional Delegates
Chairperson: Howard N. Drobner, Boylston	North: Otto Lies, Holden
Vice Chair: Robert Hassinger, Grafton	Northeast: Julianne Hirsh, Northborough
Treasurer: Daniel Schur, Westborough	Southeast: Walter Baker, Sutton
Asst. Treas.: C. Richard Williams, Rutland	West: Jeffrey Howland, New Braintree
Clerk: Timothy H. Wheeler, Berlin	Southwest: Andrew Coles, Auburn
Staff:	Not In Attendance:
Janet A. Pierce, Executive Director	Asst. Clerk: Barur Rajeshkumar, West Boylston
Trish Settles, Dep. Dir., RCCP	Central City: David Quiroa, Worcester
Sujatha Krishnan, Dep. Dir., Transportation	
Matthew Deiulis, Administrative Assistant	

1. Call to Order:

Chairperson Drobner called the November 30, 2023 Executive Committee meeting to order at 7:03 pm with a roll call to establish a quorum.

2. Approval of Minutes-

Mr. Schur made a motion to accept the minutes of the October 26, 2023 Executive Committee Meeting, seconded by Mr. Williams. **Motion Approved with one abstention.**

3. Public Comment:

None.

4. Review of Quarterly Meeting Survey Results:

- The Committee reviewed the results of the *'Quarterly Meeting Topic Survey'*, which contained seven multiple choice and short answer questions and was distributed to all FY24 CMRPC Delegates and Alternates- of which, 42 provided responses. These questions were designed to enhance future quarterly meetings and covered the following topics: *'which of the recent meetings have they attended'*; *'would new members be interested in a new member orientation'*; *'what is more effective, in-person or virtual/hybrid meetings'*; *'what the attendees are expecting to gain from attending a*



CMRPC quarterly meeting’; and ‘which topics they would like to see presented at future meetings’.

- The committee discussed the survey’s questions and responses and ultimately came to several agreements, which were as follows: the January Quarterly meeting will be held in a hybrid setting in the basement conference rooms in the Unum Building and Chairperson Drobner will meet with CMRPC’s Matt Franz to discuss upgrading the video conferencing equipment; the Executive Committee Officers will meet to create an outline of potential meeting topics and then present these to the full Executive Committee, who were invited to pitch their own ideas, at a future date; once the topics are set, the Executive Committee will assist CMRPC staff with creating a yearly schedule of Quarterly Commission meetings and the Legislative Affairs Committee gatherings, so that.
- Following the discussions around the survey, Ms. Pierce presented a document that reported the number of Delegate and Alternates and guests that attended quarterly meetings from 2018 to 2023. Before moving on, Mr. Wheeler asked that the two items presented under this agenda item be sent out to the Executive Committee members following the meeting.

5. Executive Director’s Report:

I. Staffing and Administration:

- Ms. Pierce began her brief report with a review of the recent staffing changes, which included the hiring of one (1) intern, Kimora Scott, who is a returning CMRPC Intern that was previously employed through the Worcester Community Action Council and will now be working with the transportation team- and the resignation of one (1) employee, Matthew Deiulis, who will be resigning at the end of December.
- Ms. Pierce detailed a series of grants that were awarded to CMRPC in the last month which included several projects with notable budgets. Moreover, Ms. Pierce also reported on three grant submissions, which were all for a significant dollar amount.
- Ms. Pierce closed her section by thanking CMRPC staff for their diligent work in getting the grants submitted through the holidays and sickness.

II. Transportation:

Deputy Director Sujatha Krishnan provided the Transportation report.

- Ms. Krishnan began her report with a recounting of the November Quarterly Commission Meeting. She was grateful to Joshua Rickman, the WRTA



Administrator, and the CMRPC transportation team for conducting the presentation in her absence. Moreover, Ms. Krishnan noted because of the presentation, meetings were scheduled with several Blackstone River Communities that do not belong with the WRTA with the intent of procuring them a membership with the transit authority.

- Ms. Krishnan then discussed the November CMMPO meeting, for which members of the CMMPO Advisory Committee were in attendance. Moreover, she noted the guests were all engaged, and many stayed after the meeting to have conversations with CMMPO members and CMRPC staff.
- Ms. Krishnan pivoted from recent meeting to discuss current and upcoming staff efforts. She began by highlighting the status of the next round of Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) projects- for which request letters are being prepared and will be distributed to CMRPC communities soon. Additionally, the Federal and State Government gave CMRPC authorization to design TIP projects.
- Continuing with staff efforts, Ms. Krishnan noted they included: *'Sidewalk Prioritization Planning'*; additional *'traffic counts'* for Mount Wachusett; and arranging transit services to mitigate travel concerns for the migrants taking residence at the *Red Roof Inn* on Route 146.
- Ms. Krishnan closed her report by noting and discussing a significant number of Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFO) that have been announced.
- Ms. Settles added that CMRPC communities have been reaching out to address the many culverts in Central Massachusetts and conversations will be held to see where CMRPC can assist.
- Mr. Schur inquired if there is a list of Federally Funded grants that can be leveraged to MassDOT for them to match or inject funding- and if not, is there a way to facilitate this. Ms. Pierce and Ms. Krishnan both provided sufficient responses.

III. Regional Collaboration and Community Planning (RCCP):

Deputy Director Trish Settles provided the RCCP report.

- Ms. Settles began her report by discussing staff's significant efforts to submit a variety proposals and grant applications both for the commission's regional plans and on the behalf of CMRPC communities for local initiatives. These included: *'Digital Equity Planning'*; *'EEA Planning Assistance'*; *'Affordable Housing Trust Planning'*; *'Open-Space and Recreation Planning'*; *'Brownfields'* and *'Thriving Communities'* grants.



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- Chairperson Drobner inquired if the *Brownfields* grant opportunity would be regionwide. Ms. Settles confirmed this and briefly detailed the timeline, scope and focus for the proposed application of the funds.
- Ms. Pierce added to the report by noting the dollar amount for a CDBG project in Millbury and detailing an expected contract that will provide DLTA funding for FY 2024.

6. Approval of Warrant for Payment of Bills and Review of Financial Statements: (1:04:00)

Executive Director Janet Pierce presented Warrant #24-05 for the payment of bills as required by Section 7, Chapter 40B, for the month of November 2023 totaling \$101,533.91.

- Mr. Williams made a motion to approve Warrant #24-05 for the month of November 2023 in the amount of \$101,533.91, seconded by Mr. Howland.

Motion approved.

The report of cash and the cash flow chart were presented to committee members, showing an ending general fund balance as of October 2023, of \$3,084,055.77.

7. Committee and Sub-Regional Briefings:

- a. Transportation** – Mr. Hassinger recalled the previous T-Committee meeting, which was held prior to the Executive Committee meeting. He noted that they voted to recommend the *'Title 6 Plan'* updates to the CMMPO for their approval. Moreover, upon request from Ms. Hirsh, Mr. Hassinger and Ms. Krishnan briefly explained what *'Title 6'* is.
- b. Legislative Affairs** – Ms. Settles noted that the Legislative Affairs Committee (LAC) have been busy with preparing for the upcoming LAC Breakfast event in early December and she hopes that they will provide a proposal for changes to the policy on legislative affairs for the December Executive Committee meeting.
- c. Physical Development Committee**- Mr. Wheeler reported that District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) request of proposal letters will be sent soon and he encouraged his fellow members to discuss this at their town meetings.
- d. Rural Caucus**– Ms. Settles reported that they last met in October, and it was well attended. Moreover, the discussions mainly pertained to public health services.
- e. Southern Worcester County Economic Development Organization** – Ms. Pierce reported that the Southern Worcester County Economic Development Strategy was submitted by CMRPC staff to the EDA the day following its approval at the



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November Quarterly Commission meeting and the staff are waiting on the EDA's approval.

f. Sub-regional–

- Chairperson Drobner asked each subregion for their updates; they were as follows:
 - i. North: No news to report.
 - ii. Northeast: Ms. Hirsh noted that Northborough will be building a new fire station.
 - iii. West: No news to report.
 - iv. Southwest: No news to report.
 - v. Central: Mr. Quiora was not present to report.
- Chairperson Drobner added that Boylston is interested in grant opportunities to address issues with their town facilities.

8. New Business:

- Ms. Pierce noted that the advertisement for the Human Resources Manager went out earlier in the week and is posted on MMA and LinkedIn. Moreover, they have already received four (4) applications.
- The Executive Committee briefly discussed the potential of holding the December Executive Committee meeting in January as to not impede on the committee member's holiday plans. After some discussion, it was agreed that the December 2023 meeting would be moved to January 4, 2024 and a January Personnel meeting will be scheduled sometime before the January 4th meeting.

9. Adjournment: Upon a motion by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Howland to adjourn at 8:35 pm. **The vote by roll call was unanimous. Motion approved.**

Respectfully submitted by Matthew Deiulis, CMRPC.