



1 Mercantile Street – Suite 520
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 www.cmrpc.org

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
 February 29, 2024 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	Southwest: Andrew Coles, Auburn
Clerk: Timothy H. Wheeler, Berlin	West: Jeffrey Howland, New Braintree
Staff:	Central City: David Quiroa, Worcester
Janet A. Pierce, Executive Director	Asst. Clerk: Barur Rajeshkumar, West Boylston
Trish Settles, Dep. Dir., RCCP	Attendees
Sujatha Krishnan, Dep. Dir., Transportation	Robert King, Oxford
Anthony Senesi, Communications Coordinator	Joseph Belrose, Blackstone

1. Call to Order:

Chairperson Drobner called the February 29, 2024, Executive Committee meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. with a roll call to establish a quorum.

2. Approval of Minutes-

Mr. Williams made a motion to accept the minutes of the January 25, 2024, Executive Committee Meeting, seconded by Mr. Schur. **Motion Approved.**

3. Public Comment:

None.

4. Vote to Recommend FY25 CMRPC Annual Budget

Mr. Drobner stated that the Budget Subcommittee recommended the FY25 CMRPC Annual Budget to the Executive Committee. Mr. Drobner briefly described the Anticipated Revenue and the Anticipated Expenditures. Mr. Drobner stated that the increase in revenue is roughly a 30% increase compared to the FY24 CMRPC Annual Budget. Mr. Drobner stated that the increase is due in part to a significant anticipated increase in funding from Federal



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grants. Mr. Drobner stated that the proposed budget includes funding for 62 staff members, including 4 interns.

Mr. Rajeshkumar made a motion to recommend the proposed FY25 CMRPC Annual Budget to the full CMRPC Commission, seconded by Mr. Williams. **Motion Approved.**

Mr. Wheeler congratulated Ms. Pierce, Ms. Settles, and Ms. Krishnan for their impressive achievement. Mr. Wheeler stated that CMRPC has grown significantly in the past decade because of the leadership of CMRPC.

5. Executive Director's Report:

I. Staffing and Administration:

- Ms. Pierce stated that Mr. Senesi, Ms. Toupin, and herself interviewed candidates for the vacant Executive Assistant position. Ms. Pierce stated that they are anticipating making a final offer to the chosen candidate in the next day.
- Ms. Pierce stated that in the next few weeks, the Finance Manager position will be advertised to the public.
- Ms. Pierce stated that the Independent Auditor will be presenting the Audit at the March Executive Committee meeting on March 28, 2024.

At this point in the meeting, Jeffrey Howland recused himself and left the room.

II. Discussion and vote to create a new Senior Staff Engineer and Update Current Salary Schedule to Include Engineer Positions:

- Ms. Pierce stated that on February 28, 2024, the Personnel Subcommittee recommended the creation of a new Senior Staff Engineer and to update the current Salary Schedule to include engineer positions. Ms. Pierce stated that the proposed position has three levels of engineers. Ms. Pierce stated that the proposed job description and the proposed hiring would be for the senior-level position. Ms. Pierce stated that the three tiers are: Junior Engineer (\$58,500 - \$67,275 with a B.S. in Engineering with 2 years of experience), Mid-Level Engineer (\$65,000 - \$94,250 with a B.S. in Engineering with 5 years of experience), Senior Staff Engineer (\$93,000 - \$120,000 with a B.S. in Engineering with 10 years of experience).



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- Ms. Krishnan stated that the proposed Senior Engineer would be primarily providing project management and project development support for Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) programmed projects. Ms. Krishnan stated that the position would be entirely funded through CMRPC's Transportation Budget. Ms. Krishnan stated that other Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are interested in seeing if the position is successful and may be replicable throughout the Commonwealth.
- Ms. Krishnan stated that the position would also be able to assist municipalities in the region with infrastructure projects on a contract-based basis. Ms. Krishnan stated that the position may assist with the Complete Streets program and Federal transportation-related grants.

Mr. Wheeler made a motion to approve the creation of the new Senior Staff Engineer position and to approve the update of the current Salary Schedule to include engineer positions, seconded by Mr. Williams. **Motion Approved.**

I. Staffing and Administration (Continued):

- Ms. Pierce stated that the CMRPC Non-Discrimination & Grievance Policy was approved recently by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

At this point in the meeting, Jeffrey Howland came back into the room and re-joined the Executive Committee meeting.

III. Transportation:

Deputy Director Sujatha Krishnan provided the Transportation report.

- Ms. Krishnan said that the CMMPO held their TIP Readiness Day, and she reported that a handful of projects that have been programmed are falling behind schedule, including three projects from the City of Worcester, and one project from the Town of Northbridge. Ms. Krishnan stated that the MPO is working hard to stay on target.

IV. Regional Collaboration and Community Planning (RCCP):

Deputy Director Trish Settles provided the RCCP report.

- Ms. Settles said that some RCCP staff are working to complete the Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) for the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant, which includes proposed implementation strategies for the region.
- Ms. Settles said that staff are working on three ADA Plan proposals.



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- Ms. Settles said that staff are working to complete and submit the Barre Master Plan and the Brookfield Master Plan.
- Ms. Settles said that staff are working with the Blackstone Collaborative on a regional application for the Blackstone River Watershed.

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

Executive Director Janet Pierce presented Warrant #24-08 for the payment of bills as required by Section 7, Chapter 40B, for the month of February 2024 totaling \$67,553.31.

- Mr. Williams made a motion to approve Warrant #24-08 for the month of February 2024 in the amount of \$67,553.31, seconded by Mr. Hirsh. **Motion approved.**

The report of cash and the cash flow chart (November 1, 2023, through January 31, 2024) were presented to the Committee.

7. Committee and Sub-Regional Briefings:

- a. Transportation** – Mr. Hassinger stated at the Transportation Committee meeting earlier in the evening that the Proposed Amendment #4 for the 2024-2028 TIP Highway projects was recommended to be approved. Mr. Hassinger stated that there was a ranking of projects for the proposed 2025-2029 TIP.
- b. Legislative Affairs** – Ms. Settles described the proposed roles and responsibilities of the Legislative Affairs Committee. Mr. Drobner suggested that the Committee discuss the proposal at the March 2024 Executive Committee meeting.
- c. Physical Development Committee**- Mr. Wheeler said that the Physical Development Committee will meet in March to allocate additional 2024 DLTA funds to projects.
- d. Rural Caucus**– Ms. Settles reported that the Caucus will meet again in the Spring of 2024.
- e. Southern Worcester County Economic Development Organization** – Ms. Pierce stated that the Quarterly meeting will be occurring at MassHires in the next month.
- f. Sub-regional**–
 - Chairperson Drobner asked two sub-region representatives to provide updates for their respective sub-regions.
 - i. Central Region: Mr. Quiroa stated that the City of Worcester will be receiving a grant for 15 electric school buses from the Federal Clean School Bus Program. Mr. Quiroa stated that the City is holding a Worcester Landlord Summit to discuss resources for landlords.



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- ii. Northeast Sub-Region: Ms. Hirsh thanked Mr. Senesi for providing a status for pending legislation in the State House.

8. New Business: None

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

Respectfully submitted by Anthony Senesi, CMRPC.