



MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MRPC)
THURSDAY, APRIL 7, 2022
7:00 PM

VIRTUAL MEETING
MINUTES

7:00 PM **1. Open Meeting, Introductions, and Announcements**

Chairman G. Corbosiero called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. G. Corbosiero stated in accordance with Governor Baker’s Covid-19 Executive Order regarding the Open Meeting Law and remote participation, votes will be taken through Roll Call.

7:05 PM **2. Approval of March 3, 2022, MRPC Minutes – Approval of Commissioners Requested**

Having no objections to the March 3, 2022 minutes, R. Swartz moved to approve the March 3, 2022 minutes as written. The motion was seconded.

Roll Call Vote Followed:

- A. Pease- abstain
- A. Butland- yes
- G. Corbosiero- yes
- J. Telepciak- yes
- L. Shifrin- yes
- R. Swartz- yes
- R. Hoyt- yes
- S. Donahue- yes

7:10 PM **3. Guest Announcements and Questions**

G. Kahale announced MART will be changing the farebox collection system on the buses to be more reliable, efficient, and easier for MART clients to purchase tickets and passes. In addition, MART will be installing 10-12 vending machines throughout the MART bus route system. These vending machines will allow riders to purchase bus tickets without having to go to MART offices, making this more convenient for the riders. The vending machines will be located at ITC, Monument Square, and Athol. MART continues looking to improve its bus routes throughout the

region. MART is open to suggestions on additional locations for the vending machines as well as any idea on how they can improve their bus routes. If you have any suggestions, please reach out to G. Kahale.

7:15 PM

4. Cash Schedule – March 2022 – Acceptance of Commissioners Requested

L. Shifrin commented that she appreciates receiving the general ledger detail and notices something different each month. L. Shifrin asked for clarification of OBRA and Non-OBRA. L. Quinlivan explained that OBRA is a deferred compensation plan. For full-time staff, this is an optional retirement savings plan, Non-OBRA. OBRA is the mandatory employee-funded defined contribution plan for part-time, seasonal, and short-term public employees who can't contribute to the retirement system. Because we don't pay into Social Security and part-time employees can't join the retirement board, they have to pay into the deferred compensation plan.

L. Shifrin read the March 2022 cash schedule. Opening balance \$677,535.44, total receipts this month \$78,152.48, total cash on hand before this warrant \$755,687.92, less amount of this warrant \$94,452.15, balance after this warrant \$661,235.77.

A. Pease moved to accept the March 2022 Cash Schedule as presented, subject to audit. The motion was seconded.

Roll Call Vote Followed:

A. Pease- yes
A. Butland- yes
G. Corbosiero- yes
J. Telepciak- yes
J. Kranz- yes
L. Shifrin- yes
R. Swartz- yes
R. Hoyt- yes
S. Donahue- yes

7:20 PM

5. Election of Community Delegates and Alternate Delegates to the Nominating Committee for the Purpose of Creating a Slate of Officers to Serve on the Executive Committee
Please see Article 2, COMMISSION ORGANIZATION, page 2 of the MRPC's Bylaws, here, https://www.mrpc.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf3491/f/uploads/mrpc_bylaws_amended_8-01-19.pdf

G. Eaton stated R. Swartz, K. Nartowicz and J. Telepciak volunteered to be on the Nominating Committee.

R. Swartz moved to accept the Nominating Committee members as presented. The motion was seconded.

Roll Call Vote Followed:

A. Pease- yes

- A. Butland- yes
- G. Corbosiero- yes
- J. Telepciak- yes
- J. Kranz- yes
- L. Shifrin- yes
- R. Swartz- yes
- R. Hoyt- yes
- S. Donahue- yes

7:30 PM

6. Administrative Matters

6.1 Outreach to Communities and Partners

An educational and outreach package (marketing materials) has been drafted. They will be finalized and issued to our communities by April 15th.

G. Eaton stated we are updating our website to refresh the narrative.

6.2 New Funding Updates

Growing Places, Inc. and the US Department of Agriculture

Last summer, Growing Places, Inc. (GPI) asked MRPC to partner with and be a consultant to the organization as this related to a proposal submitted by GPI to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). MRPC staff will assist with completing the following tasks: SWOT and SOAR analyses (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results, respectively); analysis and report, public outreach, and related analyses and reporting tasks. GPI's Executive Director, Ayn Yeagle, prepared the following executive summary of the project.

Project Title: North Central MA Food System Partnership

In its 27-town footprint, North Central Massachusetts (MA) hosts upwards of 300 farms, with most identifying as small or medium in size. However, agriculture only comprises about 2% of the region's total employment, and residents are among the unhealthiest in the state.

Representing diverse sectors of the food system, the North Central MA Food System Partnership has been building momentum over two years to create a sustainable and resilient local food system. During its development, COVID-19 forced the region to move local food through new channels to keep the food system viable. This further increased awareness about our region's untapped potential and laid a solid foundation for the Partnership to build from.

Consequently, the North Central MA Food System Partnership is poised to create a vibrant

local food economy and improve the health of residents. Over the next two years, the North Central MA Food System Partnership will conduct a comprehensive planning process to create a sustainable and resilient NCMA food value chain and business model.

Key activities that will help achieve Partnership goals include a Strategic Planning process via a SWOT and SOAR analysis to formalize the partnership's vision, mission, values, goals, membership, and structure; a Feasibility Study to develop an operating and business plan for a regional Food Campus; development of a Resource Library with available funding, technical assistance, and evidence-based information to help grow the Food Campus; and the activation of a bi-directional Communication Network to connect diverse sectors within the NCMA food system.

MRPC will be compensated approximately \$30,000 for its services.

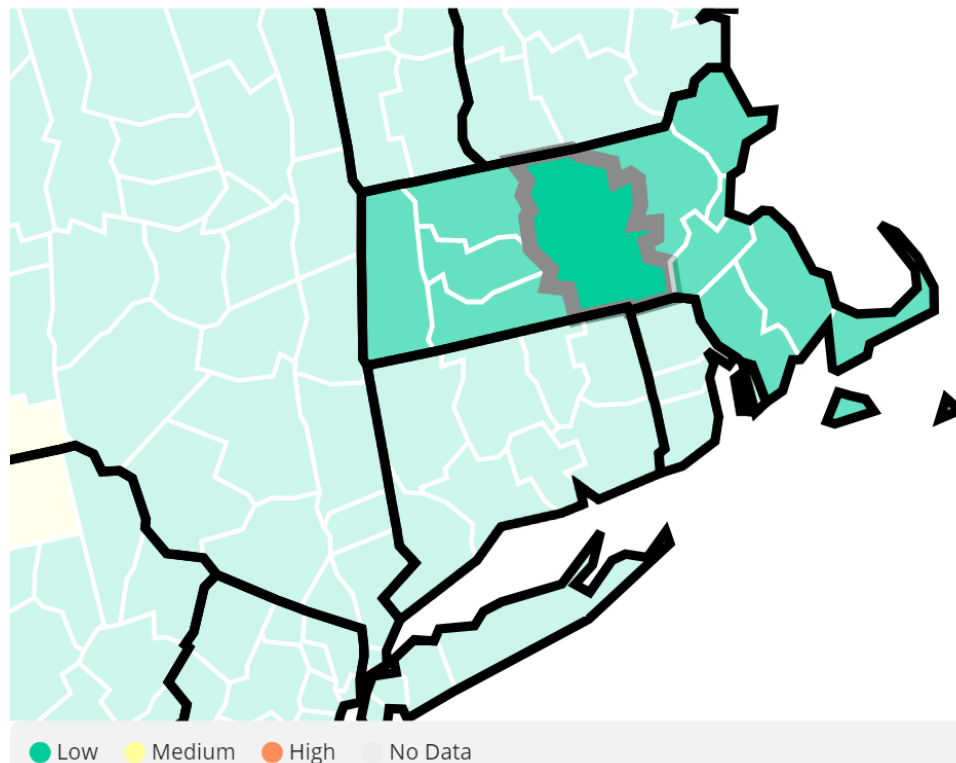
Economic Development Administration

Last month, the Planning and Development Department submitted two grant proposals to the Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA). The first was for the continued funding for the MRPC's annual economic development planning grant for \$70,000 while the second proposal was for the Future Industrial Lands for Long Term Economic Recovery and Resiliency (FILLTERR) planning project for \$1,476,096 for a three-year term.

6.3 Other Administrative Matters Related to Office Operations Under the COVID-19 Pandemic

According to the Federal Centers for Disease Controls (CDC), COVID-19 cases have declined in our region and across the nation.

COVID-19 Community Levels in Worcester County, Massachusetts



Mon Apr 04 2022 12:39:09 GMT-0400

https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view?list_select_state=Massachusetts&data-type=CommunityLevels&null=CommunityLevels&list_select_county=25027

https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view?list_select_state=all_states&list_select_county=all_counties&data-type=CommunityLevels

<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#datatracker-home>

The following update has been uploaded to the MRPC's website.

MRPC Statement Regarding Office Operations

The MRPC office will reopen no later than the end of this school year. That day will be announced in advance to all employees, Commissioners, and the general public no later than June 2022. Some of the staff continue to work remotely while others choose to work in

the office. The requirement for staff to wear masks inside the office has been rescinded, however, all staff are invited to wear masks if they choose to do so. Our office's regular business hours are from 8:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Until further notice, all monthly meetings of the following will continue to be held online, only.

- *Monthly meetings of the Commissioners*
- *Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MMPO)*
- *Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC)*
- *Joint Meetings of the Montachusett Economic Development District (MEDD) and Montachusett Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee (MRCEDS)*
- *Montachusett Brownfields Group*
- *Any other committees or subcommittees of the above*

MRPC's Executive Director may close the office if management deems this necessary for the protection of its employees, local officials, and the general public. Notice will be provided on our website and via email to employees and Commissioners.

Meetings with MRPC staff are encouraged to continue via telephonic or an appropriate tele video conferencing online service for meetings with staff that are not subject to the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law.

For meetings that are subject to the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, MRPC will abide by all, applicable and legal requirements. If feasible, MRPC may encourage the use of telephonic and/or appropriate tele video conferencing online service for public meetings to reduce greenhouse gas emissions of those traveling to the MRPC for these meetings. We will provide guidance on this topic in the future, as needed.

Employees Working Remotely and in the Office

All employees can continue working remotely or in the office, as needed. All employees will be recalled to work in the office no later than the end of the current school year. The final date is to be determined and will be provided to all well in advance. We will probably have the same system that we had last year where all employees would work at the office on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays as "core working days" and they would be allowed to work in the office or remotely on Thursdays and Fridays. Scheduling exceptions may be allowed on a case-by-case basis. Supervisors may request that assigned staff work in the office, as needed, regardless of the day of the week.

G. Eaton stated we will continue with the remote monthly meetings as long as the State amendment to the Open Meeting Law allows. We will watch to see if it is extended again.

Use of the MRPC's Atrium and/or Small Conference Room for Meetings

Office use for meetings with groups outside of the MRPC will be allowed in April; the date is to be determined. The Executive Director will work with the staff and those making requests from

outside organizations to ensure that those using our office for a group meeting will not threaten the health of MRPC's employees and visitors will not disturb those that may be working in the office on the days of groups meetings. Employees will be allowed to work remotely when outside groups use our atrium and/or small conference room for meetings.

6.4 Lease Agreement Between the TOR and the MRPC

MRPC has notified the Trustees of Reservations (TOR) management that the MRPC would like to extend its office lease another five years. TOR responded and indicated that its staff will draft a new lease agreement.

G. Eaton will follow up with TOR regarding the lease agreement as we still have not received the new lease.

6.5 Transfer of Funds into the Conferences, Meetings, Trainings Line Item

REPORT

MRPC budgeted \$1,000 in the "Conference/Meetings/Training" and \$18,000 in the "Equipment/Furniture Purchase" line items at the beginning of FY22. Current balances in both accounts stand at \$325.00 in "Conference/Meetings/Training" and \$8,387.14 in "Equipment/Furniture Purchase." The "Conference/Meetings/Training" line item was budgeted lower than usual as we did not anticipate that staff would be attending many training sessions due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. All planned equipment purchases have been made (i.e., the purchase of a new printer/copier/scanner/fax machine). No further expenditures are expected to be made from the "Equipment/Furniture Purchase" account. However, several employees wish to attend a variety of seminars and training sessions in human resources and Microsoft Office apps prior to the end of this fiscal year. The total anticipated cost will be approximately \$2,500.00+/- . To have sufficient funds in the "Conference/Meetings/Training" line item, for planned and unplanned training sessions, the Executive Director respectfully requests that a transfer of \$3,000.00 be made from the "Equipment/Furniture Purchase" account into the "Conference/Meetings/Training" line item.

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Commissioners of the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission hereby approve the request to transfer \$3,000.00 from the "Equipment/Furniture Purchase" account into the "Conference/Meetings/Training" line item.

J. Telepciak asked if the trainings are being held remotely or on location. G. Eaton stated they will be held online.

J. Telepciak move to accept the resolution as presented. The motion was seconded.

Roll Call Vote Followed:

- A. Pease- yes
- A. Butland- yes
- G. Corbosiero- yes
- J. Telepciak- yes
- J. Kranz- yes
- L. Shifrin- yes
- R. Swartz- yes
- R. Hoyt- yes
- S. Donahue- yes

7:40 PM

7. Status Report- January through March 2022

7.1 Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

7.2 Planning & Development

- **EPA Brownfields Conference and Training Request**

K. Chapman has registered to attend the EPA Brownfields Conference and Training in August 2022. The approximate cost will be \$1,200.00. We will put together a report and a resolution as the time approaches.

- **Reviews and Awards for Services: District Local Technical Assistance**

REPORT:

In response to a first solicitation, on or before March 1, 2022, a total of five (5) proposals were received by the April 4th deadline for the second round of the use of District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) resources to provide a variety of services. The proposals received are as follows:

1. **Ashburnham:** Assistance complying with the new Chapter 40A, Section 3A for MBTA Communities.
2. **Ashburnham:** Development of Goals and Objectives Master Plan Chapter.
3. **Ashby:** Assistance complying with the new Chapter 40A, Section 3A for MBTA Communities.
4. **Ayer:** Assistance complying with the new Chapter 40A, Section 3A for MBTA Communities.
5. **Lancaster:** Assistance complying with the new Chapter 40A, Section 3A for MBTA Communities.
6. **Regional COVID Dashboarding**

RESOLUTION:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) recommends

that #1 through #6 of the above-named project requests for District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA), if eligible, be **conditionally** awarded based upon further communication/ clarification/ negotiation with the applying communities and **approval from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)**. Moreover, all activities in some applications may not be awardable under the DLTA program: MRPC staff reserves the right to negotiate an awardable detailed scope of services and budget amount.

Those requests conditionally awarded (#1 through #6) are subject to the conditions listed below.

1. The services to be delivered to the communities will be completed commencing no earlier than a fully executed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the subject (lead) community and the MRPC.
2. Services will be delivered to the subject community(ies) during the implementation of the District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) program year (2022).
3. The award of services from the MRPC is subject to the:
 - a. Funding available to the MRPC during the program year (2022);
 - b. Successful negotiation of a detailed scope of services, schedule for the completion of the tasks identified in the scope of services, and budget utilizing DLTA and other funds, if available and eligible for the aforementioned project;
 - c. Execution of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the MRPC and the community(ies); and,
 - d. The MRPC's receipt of a letter from the Chief Elected Official (CEO) of all of the affected communities indicating an agreement to this proposal and willingness to participate in this analysis. (Communities may agree to participate in this analysis after the full execution of the MOU between the subject (lead) community and the MRPC but must agree to participate in order to receive the results of the report.)
4. Where and when possible the MRPC will deliver the tasks related to "analysis, preparation, and presentation ... report(s) ..." as indicated above. The MRPC and the community requesting services will "outsource" consulting services only when absolutely deemed to be necessary by both the lead community and the MRPC.
5. This is an award of services from the MRPC to the applicable community(ies). This is not a cash award.
6. If at any time DHCD determines that the project is ineligible, the award of services will be null and void.
7. The municipality and all municipal departments shall provide MRPC with cooperation/access/assistance to public data applicable to the DLTA project including the provision of such materials. Related costs associated with this (data collection, photocopying, etc.) will be at the expense of the municipality(s).

J. Telepciak move to accept the resolution as presented. The motion was seconded.

Roll Call Vote Followed:

A. Pease- yes
A. Butland- yes
G. Corbosiero- yes
J. Telepciak- yes
J. Kranz- yes
L. Shifrin- yes
R. Swartz- yes
R. Hoyt- yes
S. Donahue- yes

K. Chapman stated this rounds out our DLTA program this year. We have exhausted all the funds; we have a total of 16 projects for this year. Nine of the projects are MBTA community assistance.

7.3 Transit & Transportation

8:00 PM

8. New Business

This time is being reserved for topics that the chair did not reasonably anticipate would be discussed.

L. Shifrin thanked G. Eaton for his letter to the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development dated March 25th on behalf of 13 of the communities in this region, Townsend being one of them. We all face the same thing in trying to execute the future of additional housing units in our communities.

North Central Massachusetts Association of Realtors (NCMAR) covers about 23 cities and towns in this region and every year we hold an informal forum with the mayors of the cities being Fitchburg, Leominster, and Gardner. This morning, the conversation went to, what about the other communities? The discussion was that we can't have Selectmen come, they are not up on this kind of thing. You can't have a Town Administrator come they're really not political. For the most part, this is how they are viewed by this group. The Realtors Associations' primary purpose in legislative issues is to protect private property rights.

L. Shifrin stated she brought this up because she brought up MRPC to NCMAR and most didn't know what MRPC was. Many didn't know that their communities belonged to MRPC. L. Shifrin suggested that they reach out to Mr. Eaton and offer a forum for him to come and speak to the Realtors when they are having these community updates from the cities. This would be a great opportunity to let many people know what the role is of MRPC and how it can help their communities.

G. Eaton stated K. Chapman is responsible for writing the letter and all credit should go to Ms. Chapman. If an entity would like to learn more about us and what we do, we'd certainly like to learn about them, I'd be happy to participate. If someone from NCMAR would like to reach out, we would be happy to do that. If this were to be annual or quarterly, other staff may want to also participate.

J. Telepciak asked a question regarding the new lease. What space will we no longer have access to? Are we losing space or access to areas on site? G. Eaton stated there are no changes to the use of the area. His concern is that when the atrium is used for meetings, staff that work off the atrium are impacted. Meetings can be disruptive, staff has to walk through the meetings to use the restroom, use the breakroom, and or to communicate with other staff.

R. Hoyt suggested we coordinate meetings to be held in the atrium with days staff work remotely. G. Eaton stated we will work with staff to make sure they are informed and have the option to work remotely.

8:15 PM 9. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

This meeting will be recorded by the GoToMeeting app and will be made available for viewing on <https://www.youtube.com/user/MontachusettRegion/videos> .

This notice is subject to change with reasonable notice provided to all.

Meeting Attendance					
<u>Name</u>	<u>M/A</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Appointment Date</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Janssens, Leo	A	Ashburnham	7.2021		X
Hoyt, Roger	M	Ashburnham	7.2011	X	
Stacy, Wayne	A	Ashby	7.2021		X
Pease, Alan	M	Ashby	7.2001	X	
Bialecki, Rebecca	A	Athol	7.2017		X
Doherty, Jacqueline	M	Athol	7.2020		X
Copeland, Shaun	A	Ayer	7.2020		X
Kranz, Jonathan	M	Ayer	7.2021	X	
Vacant	A	Clinton			X
Duffy, Phil	M	Clinton	12.2011		X
Lowitt, Peter	N/V	DREZ	7.2001		X
Bohart, Mary Jo	A	Fitchburg	7.2021		X

Alyne Butland	M	Fitchburg	7.2020	X	
DeRoy, Jessica	A	Gardner	7.2021	X	
Swartz, Robert	M	Gardner	7.2019	X	
Haddad, Mark	A	Groton	7.2021		X
Burke, Russell	M	Groton	7.2016		X
Minar, Kara	A	Harvard	7.2021		X
Donahue, Stacia	M	Harvard	7.2018	X	
Stauder, Michael	A	Hubbardston	7.2020		X
Livdahl, Alice	M	Hubbardston	7.2021		X
Jackson, Carol	A	Lancaster	7.2021		X
Williston, Russell	M	Lancaster	11.2018		X
Vacant	A	Leominster			X
Valliere, Dean	M	Leominster	7.2019		X
Marino, James	A	Lunenburg	7.2020		X
Brenner, Matthew	M	Lunenburg	7.2020		X
Allen, Nancy	A	Petersham	7.2015		X
Vacant	M	Petersham			X
Telepciak, John	A	Phillipston	10.2001	X	
Vacant	M	Phillipston			X
Barclay, James	A	Royalston	7.2017		X
Nartowicz, Kyle	M	Royalston	7.2015	X	
Oelfke, William	A	Shirley	7.2020	X	
Yocum, Barbara	M	Shirley	8.2017		X
Kilcoyne, John	A	Sterling	7.2014		X
Page, Patty	M	Sterling	7.2019		X
Bennett, Jeff	A	Templeton	7.2020		X
Rich, Dennis	M	Templeton	7.2017		X

Kell, Veronica	A	Townsend	7.2021	X	
Shifrin, Laura	M	Townsend	7.2018	X	
Buckman, Gregg	A	Westminster	7.2021		X
Smith, Michael	M	Westminster	7.2019		X
Ward, Rick	A	Winchendon	7.2019	X	
Corbosiero, Guy	M	Winchendon	7.2011	X	

Guests: George Kahale- MART Representative

Staff: Glenn Eaton, Holly Ford, Karen Chapman, Kayla Kress, Linda Quinlivan, Brad Harris

DOCUMENTS/EXHIBITS DISTRIBUTED AT MEETING:

March 3, 2022 Minutes

April 7, 2022 Agenda

April 7, 2022 MRPC Meeting Handout

Contract Status Report- January through March 2022

Break the Niceness Cycle