

Jun 24 2022 8:46 am



MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MRPC)

THURSDAY, JUNE 9, 2022

7:00 PM

VIRTUAL MEETING

MINUTES

1. Open Meeting, Introductions, and Announcements

Chairman G. Corbosiero called the meeting to order at 7:02 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.

2 Approval of May 5, 2022, MRPC Minutes – Approval of Commissioners Requested

Having no objections to the May 5, 2022 minutes, J. Telepciak moved to approve the May 5 2022 minutes as written. The motion was seconded.

Roll call followed:

- A. Pease- Abstain
- B. Oelfke- Yes
- D. Valliere- Yes
- S. Donahue- Yes
- J. Bennett- Yes
- J. Telepciak- Yes
- R. Swartz- Yes
- G. Corbosiero- Yes

3. Cash Schedule – May 2022 – Acceptance of Commissioners Requested

L. Quinlivan read the May 2022 cash schedule. Opening balance \$715,271.85, total receipts this month \$106,671.32, total cash on hand before this warrant \$821,943.17, less amount of this warrant \$103,340.63, balance after this warrant \$718,602.54.

R. Swartz moved to accept the May 2022 Cash Schedule as presented, subject to audit. The motion was seconded.

Roll call followed:

- A. Pease- Yes

- B. Oelfke- Yes
- D. Valliere- Yes
- S. Donahue- Yes
- J. Bennett- Yes
- J. Telepciak- Yes
- R. Swartz- Yes
- G. Corbosiero- Yes

4. Guest Announcements and Questions

George Kahale, MART Representative-

- **MART Advisory Board Meeting**
The Board of Selectmen for the town of Phillipston has voted to petition to join the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority (MART). MART Advisory Board at their scheduled meeting on May 17, 2022, voted to accept the town of Phillipston as a MART member community. MART region total is now 24 communities.
- **Fitchburg Intermodal Transportation Center (ITC)**
MART will be doing a rehab project (roof replacement) to the ITC in Fitchburg beginning in September 2022; some impact will be on the public using the facility.
- **MART Bus Shelters Grant**
MART is being awarded \$180,000 for Shelters through the Shared Streets and Spaces Program under MassDOT for FFY23, expectantly, the fund will be available beginning October 1, 2022. MART will be installing Bus Shelters in Fitchburg, Gardner, and Athol.
MART early this month installed a new Bus Shelter at 75 East Broadway in Gardner: under the 5307-funding program. This was installed last Friday, unfortunately Saturday it was vandalized. Mart is working on fixing it.
- **Ayer Depot Square Pedestrian Plaza**
The construction of Phase III of Depot Square Pedestrian Plaza located at the MBTA station has begun. Phase III of the project is the Restroom Facility at the Pedestrian Plaza. MART anticipates the completion of the project by the end of summer or early fall 2022.
- **MART Automatic Fare Collection System (Genfare)**
Genfare AFC System is available now online for purchasing bus passes, and the Mobile App will be in the App Store beginning of June 2022, and the Ticket Vending Machines will be delivered and installed by early summer. MART will be purchasing six vending machines and will be installed in Athol, Gardner and Fitchburg. There will be six more next year. The App does more than by fares. Trip Planner, Bus Schedules, Service Alerts and more.

5. **The Nominating Committee shall present a slate of proposed members of the Executive Committee. Other delegates may be added to this slate as candidates for the various Commission offices and at-large positions by nominations from the floor of the June meeting of the Planning Commission.**

Please see Article 2, COMMISSION ORGANIZATION, page 2 of the MRPC's Bylaws, here, https://www.mrpc.org/sites/g/files/vyhliif3491/f/uploads/mrpc_bylaws_amended_8-01-19.pdf

J. Telepciak presented the following names for proposed members of the Executive Committee.

- Chair- Guy Corbosiero
- Vice Chair- John Telepciak
- Treasurer- Laura Shifrin
- Vice Treasurer- Roger Hoyt
- Secretary- Open Position
- At Large Member- Peter Cunningham
- At Large Member- Robert Swartz

B. Olefke moved to approve the proposed members of the Executive Committee as presented. Motion was seconded.

Roll call followed:

- A. Pease- Yes
- B. Oelfke- Yes
- D. Valliere- Yes
- S. Donahue- Yes
- J. Bennett- Yes
- J. Telepciak- Yes
- K. Nartowicz- Yes
- R. Swartz- Yes
- G. Corbosiero- Yes

6. Administrative Matters – Presented by G. Eaton

6.1 Financial Update

6.1.1 FY22 Budget Amendment

REPORT

MRPC's administrative teams have pored over the FY22 overhead costs for FY22 and would like to make the following recommendations for adjustments that are a combination of decreases, transfers, and increase.

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	Original Budget	New Budget 6/9/22
Employer Medicare	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 15,500.00
Unemployment Insurance	\$ 21,500.00	\$ 11,971.15
Employee Moving Expense	\$ 600.00	\$ -
Employer Share-Health/Dental Insurance	\$ 186,796.64	\$ 186,796.64
Retiree's Health Insurance	\$ 28,660.00	\$ 34,297.62
Worker's Comp Insurance	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 1,624.00
Consultant Fees	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 2,572.00
Service/Maintenance Contracts	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 7,345.86
Travel	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 454.64
Accounting/Legal	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
Advertising	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 2,261.50
Conference/Meetings/Training	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 575.00
Major Events	\$ -	\$ -
Depreciation	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00
Equipment Rental	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 639.93
Equipment Repair	\$ 250.00	\$ -
Liability Insurance	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 11,918.72
Dues & Membership	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,206.00
License Fees	\$ 4,100.00	\$ 6,466.07
Subscriptions	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 20,669.53
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$ 100.00	\$ 128.52
Office Supplies	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 5,127.93
Small Tools, Equipment & Furniture	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 1,457.41
Equipment/Furniture Purchase	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 9,612.86
Printing Expense	\$ 500.00	\$ 3.96
Postage & Shipping	\$ 500.00	\$ 460.39
Rent	\$ 33,765.00	\$ 33,765.00
Electric	\$ 11,000.00	\$ 11,000.00
Cleaning Services	\$ 6,900.00	\$ 3,000.00
Communications	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,171.77
Employee Education Reimbursement	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -
Computer Software	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 599.88
Interest Expense (Line of Credit)	\$ 500.00	\$ -
Other Post Employment Benefits	\$ 24,000.00	\$ 24,000.00
	\$ 466,171.64	\$ 433,626.38

As we approach the end of the fiscal year, we are evaluating our indirect costs. We are recommending changes to our budget as shown in the chart.

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission hereby adopts the MRPC's FY22 Budget Amendment as presented.

R. Swartz moved to adopt the resolution as presented. Motion was seconded.

Roll call followed:

- A. Pease- Yes
- B. Oelfke- Yes
- D. Valliere- Yes
- S. Donahue- Yes
- G. Corbosiero- Yes
- J. Bennett- Yes
- J. Telepciak- Yes
- K. Nartowicz- Yes
- R. Swartz- Yes
- R. Hoyt- Yes

6.1.2 FY23 Budget Adoption

REPORT

Historically, MRPC Management presents each upcoming fiscal year's budget that estimates lower than anticipated revenue and expenses that are slightly higher than expected (a "conservative" budget). By doing so, this agency will not be caught in a trap of overestimating its earnings and incurring unnecessary expenses, on staff or office costs, in the new fiscal year. The same is true for FY23. Highlights of the MRPC's FY23 Budget include the following:

- A. Total projected revenue \$1,503,848
 - 1. Federal funds \$977,947
 - a. MassDOT \$900,555
 - b. EDA Annual Planning Grant ("CEDs"), \$70,000
 - c. US EPA Brownfields \$7,392
 - 2. State funds \$401,500
 - a. District Local Technical Assistance \$268,500
 - b. Planning Assistance Grants ("PAGs") \$88,000
 - c. REPA 2 \$30,000
 - d. Green Communities \$15,000
 - 3. Local \$87,401
 - a. Community Assessments \$85,401
 - b. Leominster Zoning \$2,000 (Contract amount is \$9,000)
 - 4. Non-profit \$27,000
 - a. Growing Places, Inc. \$27,000 ("Food Hub" SWOT and SOAR Projects)

- 5. Miscellaneous \$10,000
 - a. Programmatic Costs (“Admin”) for Management of EPA Program Income Providing Loan to Public or Private Enterprise for Site Cleanup
- B. Total projected expenses of \$1,732,086
- C. Total projected deficit (as of this date) of (\$228,238) (13.2%)
- D. The projected overhead rate (OH) is approximately 133% while the current OH rate is about 125%.
 At the time that the MRPC’s Budget is adopted, each June, it is normal to show a projected deficit. The reason for this is that not all contracts that are needed to pay for all expenses have been secured by the June meeting. Normally, a deficit of under 20% can be overcome through the fiscal year with the aggressive pursuit of funding for services completed by all non-administrative personnel. New contract opportunities include new Planning Assistance Grants (PAGs) in the amount of \$60,000 and a State grant to Leominster who will, possibly, engage the MRPC for planning services for \$25,000. If these new funds are realized, our FY23 deficit would be reduced to (\$143,237.69) (8.27%).

Budget strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, follow.

Strengths

- High-quality services that have been delivered to clients and “repeat customers.”
- There will be a significant increase of around \$200,000 in the MassDOT transportation planning contract (beginning October 1, 2022 and ending September 30, 2023). Our agency will be able to deliver additional services to our region.
- After 15 years the State leadership understands the value of the District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) program. In FY23, the legislature is considering increasing this budget line item from \$3 million to \$4 million for the regional planning agencies and councils of government that receive these funds and deliver DLTA services to cities and towns.

Weaknesses

- Not all clients have been 100% pleased with our services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and improving the delivery of our services is of paramount importance.
- Over-reliance on local, state, and federal appropriations for operational costs.
- Lack of diversification of revenue earned from non-governmental organizations and marketing (outreach).
- In FY20, FY21, and FY22, communities hired the MRPC for planning services at a higher rate than in previous fiscal years. The number of MRPC contracts with communities lessened in FY22 and the trend is continuing into the beginning of FY23. This must be countered.

Opportunities

- Our agency will be able to deliver additional transportation planning services to our region.
- The staff weathered a difficult staff transition (late FY21). We’ve had to make many adjustments by increasing the workloads of several employees. We’ve hired some excellent talent. We now need to work as efficiently as possible to deliver high-quality planning products on a timely basis

without causing staff burnout and retaining the superior people that we have on the payroll.

- In FY21 and FY22, MRPC completed Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNAs) for Heywood and Health/Alliance-Clinton Hospitals. In FY22 Growing Places engage the MRPC for SWOT and other services related to the establishment of a “food hub” in the Montachusett Region. The COVID-19 pandemic created an opportunity for the MRPC to deliver case tracking and “dashboarding” services to the City of Fitchburg the Montachusett Region Public Health Network (MPHN). **All employees are responsible for identifying new opportunities that will expand our services, bring in untapped sources of funding, and continue to diversify the revenue streams of this organization. The success and sustainability of both the MRPC and Montachusett Enterprise Center, Inc. (MEC) depend upon the staff’s commitment and diligence to accomplish these goals.**
- Use the new funding in the “Outreach” line item to market our abilities to our communities.

Threats

- The future transportation planning budget could just as easily be reduced by \$200,000+/- in the future, so our organization should not over-employ new planners, but use existing human resources to deliver all planning services.
- Currently, the Planning and Development Department has five full-time planners and two part-time individuals. The part-timers have been included in the first half of FY23, but not the second.
- Sustaining the five, existing planners in the Planning and Development Department will take a great deal of determination to expand the areas in which we deliver services and obtain additional revenue to support these existing employees.
- An entry-level planner has been included in the FY23 budget. Filling this slot may, or may not, be feasible if MRPC does not secure additional contracts in the beginning of FY23.
- **The lessening of “pressing-the-flesh” with, conducting outreach to, and educating local officials that their regional planning agency is available to assist communities with planning and some development needs.**
- Issues that are beyond the control of the MRPC may impact revenue and expenses in FY23 and beyond (i.e. difficulty in finding qualified personnel, rising inflation, supply chain shortages, eastern European conflict, etc.).

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission hereby adopts the MRPC’s FY23 Budget as presented.

A. Pease requested the budget spreadsheet that was used for the presentation be sent to all commissioners.

J. Stanton added this spreadsheet to the shared folder for all to view.

R. Swartz moved to adopt the MRPC’s FY23 Budget as presented. Motion was seconded.

Roll call followed:

- A. Pease- Yes
- B. Oelfke- Yes
- D. Valliere- Yes
- S. Donahue- Yes
- G. Corbosiero- Yes
- J. Bennett- Yes
- J. Telepciak- Yes
- K. Nartowicz- Yes
- R. Swartz- Yes
- R. Hoyt- Yes

6.2 Lease Agreement Between the Trustees of Reservations (TOR) and the MRPC Approval needed to sign the amended lease agreement

REPORT

Today, the Trustees of Reservations (TOR) provided the final draft of the lease agreement with the MRPC to allow the MRPC's continued use of our current office space located at 464 Abbott Avenue, Leominster, Worcester County, Massachusetts. The lease agreement includes a 90-day termination notice clause.

TOR has proposed to include our electricity cost in our monthly rent payment. The flat monthly electricity cost has been based upon our usage over the past, five years. Our annual (or monthly) rent payments would also remain the same from FY23 through FY27 versus having a gradually increasing rent which was the basis for payment for the first five years (FY18 through FY23). Details follow from the agreement.

1. TERM OF LEASE AND RENTAL AMOUNT

The term of this lease shall be for a period of five **(5) years, commencing on July 1, 2022, and ending at midnight on June 30, 2027.**

The Base Rent for the demised premises during the initial five (5) year term of the lease shall be;

- Year 1 - \$46,800 payable in twelve (12) equal monthly installments of \$3900.00 per month,
 - Year 2 - \$46,800 payable in twelve (12) equal monthly installments of \$3900.00 per month,
 - Year 3 - \$46,800 payable in twelve (12) equal monthly installments of \$3900.00 per month,
 - Year 4 - \$46,800 payable in twelve (12) equal monthly installments of \$3900.00 per month,
 - Year 5 - \$46,800 payable in twelve (12) equal monthly installments of \$3900.00 per month,
- made payable in advance on the first (1st) day of each month and succeeding payments due on or before the first (1st) day of each and every month thereafter for the term of the lease.

Base Rent shall be inclusive of **ELECTRICITY**, water, sewer, and building insurance, to the demised premises, common area maintenance and repair, and such other utilities or facilities. (Excluding telephone and cable) serving the demised premises and/or the Property.”

The Executive Director recommends approval of the lease agreement and he respectfully requests approval to sign the lease with the TOR pending legal review.

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission hereby approves of the request of its Executive Director to execute a commercial office space lease agreement with the Trustees of Reservations (TOR) based upon the conditions as presented to the Commissioners in the above report.

J. Telepciak moved to approve the execution of the lease agreement with the Trustees of Reservations as presented pending legal review. Motion was seconded.

Roll call followed:

- A. Pease- Yes
- B. Oelfke- Yes
- D. Valliere- Yes
- S. Donahue- Yes
- G. Corbosiero- Yes
- J. Bennett- Yes
- J. Telepciak- Yes
- K. Nartowicz- Yes
- R. Swartz- Yes
- R. Hoyt- Yes

7. Department Updates

7.1 Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

No updates at this time

7.2 Planning & Development

7.2.1 MBTA Communities Planning Update

K. Chapman spoke with Chris Kluchman, DHCD’s Deputy Director of Community Services Division. She asked how we were doing in our communities, and we discussed how many of our communities were looking for assistance. DHCD expects the final guidelines to come out in June or July. They are developing a tool for GIS analysis to calculate unit capacities and areas. Those two things should be up and running in the fall. Requests for determination of compliance and the action plan that is required will be an online form which will make it easier for DHCD to track

whose doing what. To date, all our communities currently comply with the requirements. We do suggest to our communities that we have technical assistance contracts with, that we wait until we have the final guidelines before we move forward.

7.3 Transit & Transportation

B. Harris shared a handout relating to the Northern Tier Passenger Rail Study by MassDOT. They will be having another working group meeting coming June 22, 2022. There is a link on the handout if you would like to register to participate. This handout is in the folder and on our website.

8. New Business

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

S. Donahue asked about the status of the DLTA grant for Harvard. K. Chapman said she had been out of the office but would get back to her tomorrow with the status.

9. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:16pm

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					
Name	M/A	Representing	Appointment Date	Present	Absent
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, Amanda Reid- Lunenburg, Charles Sexton-Diranian- Townsend
Staff: Glenn Eaton, Holly Ford, Karen Chapman, Jason Stanton, Linda Quinlivan, Brad Harris

DOCUMENTS/EXHIBITS DISTRIBUTED AT MEETING:

- May 5, 2022 Minutes
- June 9, 2022 Agenda
- June 9, 2022 MRPC Meeting Handout
- Current Grant Opportunities
- FY22 Budget Update
- FY22 Budget Update Salaries
- FY23 First Budget Presented
- Northern Tier May 2022 News