



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

COUNCIL — *MINUTES*

Date & Time:	Thursday, October 16, 2014 / 5:30 p.m.
Location:	JW Olver Transit Center, 12 Olive Street Greenfield, MA – Downstairs Meeting Room
Facilitator:	John O' Rourke, Chair

ATTENDEES:

Stanley Garland, Bernardston; **Cheryl Dukes**, Buckland Alt.; **Kevin Fox**, Colrain; **John O'Rourke**, Conway; **Carolyn Ness**, Deerfield; **Bill Martin**, Greenfield; **Bill Latrell**, Heath; **Gordon Fretwell**, Leverett; **Michele Giarusso**, Leyden; **Christopher Boutwell**, Montague; **Marilyn Wilson**, Rowe; **John Payne**, Shelburne; **Ellen McKay**, Shutesbury; **Tom Fydenkevez**, Sunderland; **Dawn Magi**, Warwick; **Daniel Keller**, Wendell; **Lynn Sibley**, Whately; **Sam Lovejoy**, Regional Planning Bd.; **Bill Perlman**, Reg. Elected; **John Paciorek**, Reg. Elected

STAFF:

Pat Auchard, Finance Director; **Jessica Atwood**, Senior Planner; **Rebekah Boyd-Owens**, Administrative Services Coordinator; **Bob Dean**, Dir. of Regional Services; **Phoebe Walker**, Dir. of Community Services

ABSENT:

Vaughn Tower, Charlemont; **Philip Keenan**, Hawley; **David Nash**, Monroe; **No Representative appointed for New Salem and Northfield**

REGRETS:

Mary Fitz-Gibbon, Ashfield; **Randy Crochier**, Gill; **George Willard**, Orange; **Tom Sharp**, Erving

GUESTS: Scott Macpherson, GCTV

Call to Order Meeting & Roll Call

John O'Rourke convened the meeting of the Council @ 5:34 p.m. Roll call was taken. General and financial quorum present.

Approval of July 17, 2014 Minutes

Sam Lovejoy moved to accept the 7/17/14 minutes. Dawn Magi seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Communications from the Council Chair, John O' Rourke

A Broadband planning group met with local officials in Shelburne to determine how best to stretch limited state funds to expand cable across underserved towns. Buckland, Shelburne, and Conway will act as MBI's model for how to maximize coverage to unserved areas in those towns. They hope to pull together a very successful model fitting for all towns in Franklin County and across Massachusetts.

Communications from the Executive Committee (Ex Com), Chair Bill Perlman

Bill summarized the July meeting, hosted by the FRCOG Council and the Franklin Regional Planning Board, and at which Kinder Morgan (KM) presented their proposed natural gas pipeline plan. Answers to questions submitted by the audience during the meeting can be found on the FRCOG website. Carolyn Ness asked about the size of compression station planned for placement out on the Conway Ashfield border, as KM won't respond. Bill explained that the FRCOG will likely apply for intervener status. The FRCOG will also work with other planning agencies situated along the route.

The Ex Com has spent time in several meetings discussing county road issues in Montague and may eventually oversee road actions.

The Committee created a process for staff to respond within short Federal Energy Regulatory Committee timelines relative to the relicensing of the Connecticut River hydro facilities and the Northfield Mountain pumped storage capacity increase request.

The Franklin County Emergency Communications System (FCECS) experienced some major problems over the summer, but is functioning at 80%, after numerous trips by the system manager to every site. The FCECS Oversight Committee has received no complaints from police departments during this emergency maintenance period, although some fire departments report problems. Work is continuing to address remaining issues with the system. (See handout.)

Communications from the Executive Director

With FRCOG Executive Director Linda Dunlavy away, Bob Dean described a few of the highlights of the past quarter at the FRCOG. He briefed the group about the Connecticut River Scenic Byway work (see handout) and the need for local representatives to participate on the Byway committee to assist the group with completion of the group's corridor management plan.

The Cooperative Purchasing Program FY15 contracts for winter sand, salt, and other road treatments are in place. Salt costs have risen after high demand last winter. Cost increases, in part, were also reportedly a result of the lack of a sufficient number of trucks to make deliveries. Fuel costs also drove up the cost of supplies. Towns are being encouraged to plan for the possibility of another hard winter.

The FRCOG and the Connecticut River Watershed Council filed a joint motion with FERC to intervene in response to First Light's proposal to increase the generating capacity of Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage project this winter. The FRCOG doesn't want to see the power company have the unfettered ability to increase generation whenever they want, but rather, to ask for increased capacity only when needed. Because of the history of erosion when water levels fluctuate, the FRCOG feels the pumped storage facility must achieve that delicate balance between what's needed and what's too much.

See the Updates handout for details about these and many other FRCOG activities and initiatives.

Scheduling Conflict

FRCOG's November Selectboard Essentials OPEB training conflicts with the quarterly meeting of the Franklin County Selectman's Association. Phoebe Walker asked the Council how they would like that to be handled, explaining that the Selectboard Essentials could not be pushed forward to December, but would have to be re-scheduled in the spring. Carolyn Ness explained that the FCSA was holding an

important meeting (with the Opioid Task Force presenting) and that they couldn't change the date as it was scheduled to occur at GCC. Ellen McKay felt towns needed to know about OPEB now before budget building begins. Cheryl Dukes said that meeting conflicts occur all the time and that towns can decide who among them will attend which meeting. Marilyn Wilson agreed, pointing out that towns have 3 members on their select boards so they can be represented at multiple meetings on the same night. The general consensus was that both meetings were regarding important topics and should move forward as scheduled.

District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA)

Bob said that the FRCOG will once again receive state grant funds for DLTA in 2015. Staff will solicit input and ideas from all Franklin County towns as to their priority interest in planning projects and projects leading to regionalization or municipal efficiency. We will ask for one prioritized list per town, but encourage all local officials to offer input and ideas.

Budget Meeting Schedule

The next FRCOG Council Meeting will be on January 29th to avoid the Massachusetts Municipal Association Conference. John Payne reminded the Council and staff that last year some members felt they didn't have enough time to look over the budget. This year, he explained, the Finance Committee has added an extra meeting for Council members to review the budget on January 14th to help address that concern. Tom Fydenkevez said staff should get the budget out in a timely manner and not hand it to members the day of the meeting. Lynn Sibley assured him that the budget development schedule was crafted so that all members will have an opportunity to review the proposed FY16 budget at least a week before the next Council meeting.

Communications from the Franklin Regional Planning Board (FRPB), Sam Lovejoy FRPB Rep.

Sam told members he had no report on a rewrite of state zoning law as the legislation didn't make it out of the House Ways and Means committee. The definition of farming has changed however, with the size of a farm lot reduced from 5 acres to 2 acres. The FRPB is still trying to understand the change.

Sam further updated the Council on the motion by FirstLight to increase generating capacity of Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage over the winter months, saying that the FRPB feels that if FERC allows the increase, the river will likely have more silt, more turmoil, and more erosion. The board hopes FERC will deny the motion if they determine conditions in the river could change dramatically because of changed use.

Sam mentioned lastly that with Vermont Yankee closing, the 3 states affected are cooperating to deal with the economic impact.

Communications from the Finance Committee (Fin Com) , Chair Lynn Sibley

Lynn explained the topics described in the Fin Com Update section of the handout. The FY14 books are closed (but not yet audited), with a \$77,596 surplus. The Fin Com has discussed how to use the surplus and is proposing that some of the money be allocated to OPEB. Lynn updated the Council on the FRCOG's switch from the Franklin Regional Retirement System (FRRS) to the Massachusetts State Retirement System (MSRS) and the financial implications of the change (see handout).

Lynn gave an overview of the Budget Development Workbook, describing the intent of each page/spread and then answered members' questions regarding the savings to the FRCOG and the towns with the retirement system switch.

Pat Auchard explained that while the statutory assessment will go down due to joining a system without an unfunded liability, we may still have to pay a normal costs assessment, which still amounts to less than what we had to pay last year. Given the uncertainty about potential future retirement system legislation and whether or not the FRCOG will be required to pay employer normal costs, we will build the budget with that amount included. We want to be prepared in case we have to spend it.

Ellen McKay asked how towns are affected by the removal of the FRCOG's allocated share of the FRRS budget. Pat explained that an actuarial study was conducted to see if our move could be detrimental to towns. The savings far outweigh the losses: Our retirement is no longer coming from towns, she said.

Pat described budgetary changes to the Cooperative Public Health Service, which is moving away from grant-funding, and to the Cooperative Town Accounting program, which helped towns find efficiencies through the use of the FRCOG's Fundware license. Marilyn Wilson said Rowe has participated and found the accounting service "perfection," but that the cost is increasing. Bob Dean explained how the program budget is crafted, much like a municipal enterprise fund, and that all costs are shared by all participating towns. The main cost in the program is for trained staff salaries and related expenses.

Pat explained the indirect rate (see page 26 of the Budget Development Workbook). Carolyn Ness noted her appreciation for the user-friendly formatting of the new budget development workbook.

Lynn Sibley moved that the Council approve the use of \$75,000 of FRCOG's unassigned fund balance to fund the OPEB trust fund. Carolyn Ness seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of Meeting

Ellen McKay made a motion to move agenda item "Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of Meeting" to before the presentation. Bill Perlman seconded. Passed unanimously.
No topics were discussed.

Special Presentation and Discussion

Report on first Select Board Coffee Chat/Roundtable

Cheryl Dukes, Buckland Selectman, reported good attendance at the first Selectboard Roundtable meeting, at which selectmen with different skill sets met to help each other. Those organizing the roundtables are looking for topics of interest for attendees. The next meeting, at which attendees will discuss town administrators, will be November 6th.

FRCOG Involvement in Broadband Efforts

Jessica Atwood, FRCOG Senior Economic Development Planner, presented on the topic of the FRCOG's involvement in Last Mile Broadband efforts (see copy of presentation).

Adjournment

John Paciorek motioned to adjourn. Sam Lovejoy seconded. Passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Documents Distributed:

- Minutes of July 17, 2014
- Agenda
- FRCOG Updates
- FRCOG Council Membership List
- Budget Development Workbook
- CPHS Flu Clinic Schedule
- FCCIP New Energy Code: Seminar for Builders Announcement