



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

COUNCIL — MINUTES

Date & Time:	Thursday, January 29, 2016 / 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.
Location:	JW Olver Transit Center, 12 Olive Street Greenfield, MA – Downstairs Meeting Room
Facilitator:	John O’ Rourke, Chair; Elected Chair

ATTENDEES

Kayce Warren (5:40 pm), Ashfield; **Stanley Garland**, Bernardston; **Rob Riggan (5:51 pm)**, Buckland; **Kevin Fox**, Colrain; **John O’Rourke**, Conway; **Carolyn Ness**, Deerfield; **William Martin**, Greenfield; **Phillip Keenan**, Hawley; **Bill Latrell**, Heath; **Gordon Fretwell**, Leverett; **Michele Giarusso**, Leyden; **Michael Nelson**, Montague; **Wayne Hachey**, New Salem; **David Ames**, Orange; **Marilyn Wilson**, Rowe; **F. Ellen McKay**, Shutesbury; **Dawn Magi**, Warwick; **Lynn Sibley**, Whately; **Sam Lovejoy**, Reg. Plan. Board; **John Paciorek**, Regional.

STAFF

Linda Dunlavy, Executive Director; **Pat Auchard**, Finance Director; **Rebekah Boyd**, Admin Services Coordinator; **Bob Dean**, Dir. of Regional Services; **Phoebe Walker**, Dir. of Community Services

ABSENT

David Nash, Monroe; **William Bembury**, Erving; **John Ward**, Gill; **Dan Keller**, Wendell;

REGRETS

Toby Gould, Charlemont; **Andrew Baker**, Shelburne; **Tom Fydenkevez**, Sunderland; **Bill Perlman**, Regional. **Brian Noble**, Northfield

1. Meeting Call to Order & Roll Call — Adopt 10/29/15 minutes	John O’Rourke — 5 Mins
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Chair John O’Rourke convened the meeting of the Council at 5:36 p.m. Roll call was taken and a general and financial quorum was deemed present with 17 members and 67.855% of the weighted vote of the total membership in attendance (*19 members present and 73.413 % of weighted vote at 5:51 pm*).

John P. moved to adopt the minutes of 10/29/15. Sam seconded the motion, which passed with two abstentions.

2. Council Chair Update	John O’Rourke — 5 Mins
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John O. reported that members sometimes express frustration about having adequate time for Council deliberation on important policy and budget issues. John explained that internal and external timelines add stress to the Council’s budgetary season. Although staff and the Finance Committee present the Budget Development Workbook in October, some numbers like health insurance are not known until late December or early January. Furthermore, the FRCOG Charter requires that the FRCOG complete and endorse its budget by the end of January. There is no easy way to have two Council meetings to deliberate the budget unless a special meeting is called, he said.

A few years ago, the Council considered increasing the number of times per year that it meets, but members voted against increasing the number of meetings. John asked if members would like to consider this again to help with time-sensitive issues, said John. A possible 6-meeting schedule could be July, September, November, January, March, and May. If members are not interested in increasing the meeting schedule, John said staff will continue the current practice of bringing issues to appropriate Council sub-committees for deliberation.

No members expressed an opinion about the idea of adding more meetings.

Next FY16 Council Meeting Date:

Thursday, April 21

3. Executive Committee Update

Bill Perlman — 10 Mins

Franklin County Emergency Communications System

Bill P. described FCECS coverage and clarity issues and the recent upgrades (see handout).

Kinder Morgan Proposed Gas Pipeline

Bill told members that the committee approved a letter to FERC (the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) requesting intervenor status and a hearing to raise and flag the question of need for a gas pipeline. The goal of the effort is to flag the issue of need, which the committee hopes FERC will spend a great deal of time considering. Staff members have not heard yet if hearing will occur, he said.

4. Executive Director Update

Linda Dunlavy — 10 Mins

Linda D. thanked Sam, Bill, and others on the Executive Committee for taking care of FRCOG while she was on medical leave; the Finance committee, who endorsed and approved the budget without her; and her staff who all took good care of her while she was away! She welcomed new staff members Jessica McMillan, Dan Nietsche, Melissa Ward, and Randy Crochier.

Accounting Software A discussion followed on an item in Linda's update regarding a possible Accounting Software conversion from Fundware to Financial Edge. Fundware users have been offered an upgrade to new software –Financial Edge- for the cost of conversion only if agreed to by March 31. The estimated cost to convert is between \$30 and \$40 thousand as compared to paying for new accounting software plus a conversion, which is typically around \$60,000 - \$80,000. The Finance Committee had asked staff to do more research and look into other packages, suggesting that if we need to move quickly on the offer, we could call an emergency Council meeting.

Ellen M. asked if the Council could vote to appropriate the money by phone? Linda replied that doing so would not be in accordance with state open meeting law. Sam L. wondered if the Council could vote to give the Finance Committee and staff the authority to make the decision and vote to appropriate the money.

In Pat's opinion, the Council could approve the use of Undesignated Fund Balance Reserve funds but would need to also vote to put the funds into a budget. If they voted to increase the Miscellaneous and Contingency budget, use of the funds would require a vote from the Finance Committee.

Stan G. asked what happens if the Council does nothing. Linda explained that while another deal may emerge, the one on the table goes away as of March 31. She said we know tech support for the current software will expire eventually, and Council could deal with it once that happened if desired.

Stan G. moved to transfer \$40,000 from the undesignated reserve fund balance to the fy16 miscellaneous and contingency account to convert data from the old accounting program to a new one, meeting the approval of the finance committee. Sam seconded the motion.

Ellen M. opined that, from her experience, this was not enough money. John O. asked Pat and Linda if they were comfortable with \$40,000. Pat said that in addition to conversion costs, there is the cost for a reporting module that the finance department relies on heavily. She received a total quote of \$43,000.

Ellen M. amended the motion to “transfer \$43,000 from the undesignated reserve fund balance to the fy16 miscellaneous and contingency account meeting, to convert data from the old accounting program to a new one and for purchase of the reporting software F9, meeting the approval of finance committee.” Michelle G. seconded.

Sam L. said he supported the \$40,000, but felt if the \$3,000 was needed the finance committee could find it elsewhere in the budget. Bill M. asked if there might be other modules to purchase after make conversion. Pat said she was aware of no others.

The vote on the amended motion failed, with all members opposed.

The original motion, to transfer \$40,000 from the undesignated reserve fund balance to the fy16 miscellaneous and contingency account to convert data from the old accounting program to a new one, meeting the approval of the finance committee, passed with all members but Bill M. in favor and by 55.483 % of the weighted vote present.

5. Personnel Committee Update

Gordon Fretwell & Bill Perlman — 10 Mins

Gordon reported that a preliminary draft of the **Personnel Policy** has been sent to the administrative staff for initial review. The Policy will be reviewed by the Personnel Committee starting in late February, with hopes for a presentation to the Council in April and a vote in April or July. He explained that the **Wage and Classification Study** will likely be complete and presented to the Personnel Committee in February. The Committee will share the results and findings of the Study with Council members at its April meeting.

6. Planning Board Update

Sam Lovejoy — 10 Mins

Sam deferred his time to the Finance Committee presentation.

7. Finance Committee Update and Budget Presentation

Lynn Sibley — 15 Mins

Lynn Sibley gave a slideshow presentation (see handout) focusing on the FY17 budget highlights and describing changes in the budget.

Major changes/highlights include:

- An uptick in costs for health insurance due to rate increases and increased staffing

- An assessment for normal costs for retirement that would be used for OPEB funding if not used for retirement
- OPEB funding remains the same as last fiscal year at \$150,000
- A 2% staff raise (Competitive Market Increase)
- Indirect revenue increase of \$163,000
- Regional Services Assessment up by 1.7 %
- Statutory Assessment up by 9.6 % due to increases in health insurance
- FRTA lease increase of \$5,000
- The cost of an additional single audit

Regional Services

Changes not noted above include a reduction in regional project planner and the addition of a new fiscal position; an increase in the local planning line because this line is partly funded by the Planning Director's direct charging to planning grants (currently the director spends a good amount of time on the Pipeline project so isn't charging as much direct time to planning grants.); a "scholarship" line for staff development; and dues increases for NADO membership for FY 17.

Stan G. asked about the increase in Rosenberg Conference. Linda D. explained that the conference has become more popular and more expensive, but is still a valuable service and a good use of funding. Bill Martin noted that the April 9 conference will be at GCC this year because the Clarion has closed.

Network Server Expense

Linda explained that the budget has built in \$11,000 to upgrade the agency server (\$7000), related software (\$1,500), and a "buffalo box," the communicator between on- and off-site back-ups (\$1,500). The lifespan of servers is 4-5 years, she said, adding that in April ours will reach its life expectancy. Kayce W. urged staff to get the buffalo box.

Program Budgets

- Purchasing — decreased
- Cooperative Public Health Service (CPHS) — decrease due to small staffing changes
- Town accounting program — small increase in salaries
- Inspection Program (FCCIP) — first increase in 5 years due to increases in electrical inspection staffing, intensified solar work and associated travel, and time spent as zoning officers on each towns zoning issues. Permit revenue has exceeded expectations to date.
- Emergency Communication System (FCECS) — increase of approximately \$2,000.
- Planning admin — no change
- Emergency Preparedness (REPC) — no change to budget

Lynn S. reminded members of the discussion of needing to put more money into the emergency communication (FCECS) budget for capital replacement. Although percentagewise the increase looks large, the total impact of budget is only an increase of roughly \$2000. The communication system is a complicated one, said Lynn; and we need to come up with a plan to replace equipment. She said the finance committee is giving direction to the oversight board to investigate setting up a capital plan and make upgrades to system, adding that they want Council members to be aware that some capital expenses may be coming down the pike.

Bill P. said that FRCOG oversees FCECS, and with no more homeland security money, the users will not be able to get the money to modernize and will need help to replace. A consultant's report is coming soon and should give us an estimate on costs, he said.

Following the presentation, Lynn S. told members that the finance committee wholeheartedly supports the budget and recommends its passage to the Council.

Ellen McKay moved acceptance of the FRCOG FY17 budget of \$3,450, 864. Carolyn N. seconded. The budget passed with members unanimously in favor.

8. Special Presentation and Discussion – DLTA project to explore feasibility and logistics of a shared Human Resource function Bob Dean —20 minutes

Bob explained that FRCOG staff are looking at the feasibility of towns sharing human resource functions. Some of the needs identified were to handle filing, to recruit staff, to create job descriptions, to coordinate benefits, to train staff, to have legal questions adequately answered and so on.

One idea is to hire a consultant to work with towns and discern the range of the needs. Then towns might decide to hire someone to share with another town or school, or consult with a third party, such as an employers association (EANE). Bob told members that the FRCOG is seeking ideas.

Bob handed out the summary of *An Act to Modernize Municipal Finance and Government*, a document that came out of Governor Baker's attempt to help municipalities. The Governor put out a plea asking local officials to let him know what they think. He urged members to consider the changes, and pass opinions on to their legislators.

9. Business Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance

Sam L. said the Executive Committee will also entertain and oversee the \$40,000 data conversion question/vote as well as the finance committee and will communicate with people.

Gordon F. announced that the House passed another access to public records bill. Linda reported that both the house and senate passed it, and that it was now going to the conference committee. We will need to learn what happened in the senate and weigh in with the conference committee, she said. Gordon asked if that information could be emailed out to select boards.

Dawn M. made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bill M. seconded. Adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

Documents Distributed:

- Agenda
- Minutes of October 29, 2016
- Updates of FRCOG Initiatives and Projects
- FY17 Budget
- PowerPoint Budget presentation
- *An Act to Modernize Municipal Finance and Government*