



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Executive Committee —MINUTES

Date & Time:	Thursday April 14, 2016/ 5 p.m.
Location:	JW Olver Transit Center, 12 Olive Street Greenfield, MA – Shared Meeting Room
Facilitator:	Bill Perlman, Chair

Representatives:

- Bill Perlman, Regionally Elected Representative
- Sam Lovejoy, Regional Planning Board Representative
- John Paciorek, Regionally Elected Representative

Staff Members:

- Linda Dunlavy, Executive Director
- Rebekah Boyd-Owens, Administrative Services Coordinator
- Phoebe Walker, Director of Community Services

Regrets:

- Kevin Fox, Colrain Representative

Guests:

- John O’ Rourke, Council Chair, Conway Representative

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA:

1. Adopt 3/8/16 minutes

Bill P. opened the meeting at 5:05 p.m.

S. Lovejoy moved to adopt the 3/8/16 minutes. J. Paciorek seconded. Bill made a motion to amend the minutes. J. Paciorek seconded. Unanimously passed.

2. Whately Road Hearing Continuation

Bill P. opened the Whately Road hearing at 5:10 p.m. Members realized they didn’t have a quorum to hold the hearing. Meeting closed at 5:11 and continued to next regularly scheduled Ex Com meeting.

3. Review of Pipeline Activities and Next Steps Discussion

Peggy S. reported that pipeline work was feeling a lull currently while waiting for a draft environmental impact statement of the proposed NED pipeline to be released by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). We haven’t yet heard about our request for hearing, said Peg, although we’ve drafted a letter to go to FERC asking for a written response.

John P. requested clarification regarding intervenor status. Peg said presumably 7 of 8 towns that applied were given intervenor status like FRCOG’s. Montague has both FERC level intervenor status and DPU status. Montague aims to fully understand the status of contracts with local utilities, such as Berkshire Gas, and has raised concern about whether a moratorium is needed.

Peg passed out a memo outlining the FRCOG's pipeline work since July 2014. Briefing the memo, she asked members if it was time to discuss whether the Executive Committee or Council should take a position on the pipeline. She said the need for the pipeline has not been demonstrated and listed the significant impacts to the environmental and cultural resources of the region along with the many town and regional concerns if the NED pipeline is approved by FERC. To date FRCOG has remained neutral, although many of our towns would like us to take a position. This committee said it wouldn't take a position until we have intervenor status, added Linda D asking members if they had enough information now.

Bill P. said the committee wanted to get answers to hard questions before taking a position and said he felt it made sense to remain neutral until requested studies are done. Peg said FERC was under no obligation to do the studies. We have much concern about environmental impact, we don't need to wait, she said. John O. asked what the advantage to taking a position might be. Linda expressed that FRCOG not having taken a position can make it challenging for staff. And our mission is to support our municipalities, said Peggy. Committees, neighbors, feel it's not good for the county, and people don't understand why we haven't made up our minds, she said.

Bill and Sam both felt strongly that it's been strategic to be neutral up to this point. Sam said following receipt of the draft environmental statement would be the best time to decide. The consensus of the committee was to wait on taking a position on the proposed pipeline.

4. Marijuana Legalization/Ballot Issue Presentation

Phoebe explained that a marijuana legalization question will be on the ballot in November, and that the Coalitions That Care (CTC) would like to come to the board next month and to consider taking a stand regarding the ballot question. She asked if her staff could come back to present to the committee and if they were open to taking a stand. Members invited them to return.

5. Net Metering Legislation Discussion

Linda noted that several folks went to the net metering workshop at Rosenberg's conference and asked how the recent legislation fits in with the state's goal to move to 50% renewable energy by 2020. John O. said that we're looking at the facts and figures supplied by the utility only and that we should broaden our analysis.

John O. explained that the Commonwealth is adding additional solar facilities slowly because when electric companies rely more on solar, they reduce the reliability of system because it's sometimes sunny and sometimes not. Linda questioned why WMECO says it costs them more as solar use increases. Members explained that the utility companies only make money on transmission, not on supply and distribution. As more people use solar to fully offset their electric bill, the distribution costs remain and must be borne by non-solarized ratepayers.

Members discussed possibilities for taking a position on the net metering. Staff will discuss with legislators ways FRCOG might help support solar generation and utilities simultaneously.

6. Business Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance

With some time left in the meeting, Linda reported the following items:

- Deerfield voted 6-0 in favor of staying with FRCOG.

- Governor Baker asked Linda to continue as a member of MBI and to be the Franklin County representative on the Rural Policy Commission.
- Out of the Active Shooter Symposium arose the question of the safety of the design of the building and FRCOG offices. The Greenfield Police will conduct a walk-through with staff to discuss security options.
- Staff is looking at the many multiplying committees, boards, advisory groups, and workshops and wondering if FRCOG is operating in most efficient way possible. Staff now has trouble getting access to meeting rooms and is asking “How many do we need? How many actually make policy or decisions.” Staff is planning a comparative study to see if there’s a more efficient way to accomplish what needs to be done without so many meetings. Executive Committee members agreed and Sam noted the possibility of reducing the FRPB meetings so that either the Council or the FRPB meets monthly.

John P. moved to adjourn the meeting. Sam L. seconded. The meeting closed at 6:24 p.m.

Documents Distributed:

- Agenda
- Minutes of 1/7/16 meeting
- Flyers for Upcoming Selectboard Essentials Workshops: *Municipal Law Basics & The Shifting Marijuana Landscape: What You Need To Know*
- Memo from Linda Dunlavy and Peggy Sloan, Re: KM-TGP Northeast Energy Direct (NED) gas pipeline project, dated April 14