



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Executive Committee —MINUTES

Date & Time:	Wednesday, July 9, 2015/ 5:00 p.m.
Location:	JW Olver Transit Center, 12 Olive Street Greenfield, MA – Library
Facilitator:	Bill Perlman, Chair

Representatives:

- Bill Perlman, Regionally Elected
- John Paciorek, Regionally Elected
- Sam Lovejoy, Franklin Regional Planning Board
- Kevin Fox, Colrain
- Bill Martin, Greenfield

Guests:

- John O’Rourke, FRCOG Council Chair

Staff Members:

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

1. Adopt 5/27/15 minutes

Bill Perlman opened the meeting at 5 p.m. **Sam moved to adopt the amended 5/27/15 minutes. John P. seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

2. Pipeline Report

Linda reported that FERC will hold a public hearing on July 29 for the region to comment on the components of an EIS. Citizens are allowed 3 minutes of testimony and anyone can submit written comments related to Environmental Impact Statement until August 31.

FRCOG has been working with 9 regions that potentially will be impacted by the pipeline (in MA and NH) to focus on particular areas of concern. Instead of submitting the same concerns 9 times, they will work together and send a single document. We’re not taking a stance pro or con, but are asking that enough data is collected and analyzed to know if and how the region will be affected. Linda asked committee members if they were interest in reviewing the document, to which Bill P. volunteered.

Carolyn Elefant, Esq., of Washington D.C. has been retained to assist FRCOG in the FERC permitting process related to the proposed pipeline. She has agreed to review and comment on the draft study requests FRCOG is preparing for the FERC scoping session; prepare a model request for intervener status; provide suggestions on legal strategies to protect public health and safety, and to minimize impacts on natural and cultural resources if the pipeline is constructed, among other things (*see correspondence handout*). She has offered to assist the FRCOG with their 10 identified needs— and more — for a flat \$10,000 fee, as she doesn’t believe in charging a prohibitive hourly rate which might

make clients less willing to call with questions. Another attorney, currently working with Berkshire County, was not quite the right fit, and far more expensive, Linda said. Sam was impressed that Atty. Elefant was retained for so little money.

Mayor Martin asked how much FRCOG had raised from towns. Linda explained that the towns will meet next Monday and she'll know more after that.

Staff recently convened all impacted communities. The communities talked about study requirements and scope agreements but there are some differences of opinion about how to approach and how much to invest in the issue. Timing is a large part of the disagreement between towns, reported Linda. Some towns feel like even participating in the group means they are conceding to the pipeline project. The meetings have consisted mostly of information sharing.

Kevin spoke to the need for an abutter's host agreement with the company. Buckland has a shared fire district with Shelburne (through which the pipeline will run), and hosts the fire station, he said, referring to the ways towns often share costs, EMS equipment, and the impacts of major changes. Atty. Elefant feels neither FERC nor Kinder/Morgan will help abutting towns with host agreements.

Atty. Elefant told FRCOG that the FERC process for hydroelectric facilities and pipelines is very different. With hydro, FERC has some responsibility to include public testimony in the components of the environmental impact statement. With pipeline projects, FERC does not. She suggested towns may want to find the money to fund an independent study. Sam noted that the region does have college resources for those sorts of studies. Closing of the notice of intent is 8/31 said Linda. September 15 FERC will report what will be included in the environmental impact study.

Linda reminded the group that Council didn't vote unanimously to spend money on this project, and that towns aren't unanimously backing a particular initiative either.

3. Broadband Update

Linda thought she would be reporting that FRCOG involvement with the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) would expire on June 30. However, during a June 24, meeting, after strongly suggesting that the rudderless group create 3-, 6-, 9-, and 12-month strategic plans, she and Jessica Atwood volunteered to do it. Thus, the contract extends through Sept 30, and FRCOG will play a back-seat role.

MBI came to Colrain and didn't know what to say, said Kevin. Misinformation abounds and people need to stop accepting statements as facts. Many people think you can't access MBI money if you don't go with Wired West. There should have been a referendum about whether or not towns wanted broadband, not whether or not town wants Wired West, said Kevin, adding that the newspaper repeatedly conflates the two.

MBI and the Mass Tech Collaborative have not done a good job running this out. People on the east coast are asking why the west is getting all the money, Bill M. added.

Bill M. asked if staff has put themselves into the fire by offering to draft a strategic plan. Linda hopes not.

Kevin said he felt every meeting between MBI and Wired West is a negotiation. MBI needs to step outside of relationship and make independent decisions, he said.

4. New Grants and Staffing

The Health and Medical Coordinating Coalition (HMCC) grant was awarded this summer to FRCOG making us the western Massachusetts public health preparedness coordinating hub. All hospitals, long-term care facilities, community health centers, and local boards of health in 94 towns will be interfacing with us to improve the integration of plans and emergency response systems. Tracy Rogers and Mark Maloni will have key roles in the implementation of this 10-year grant, and FRCOG will hire another person to work with the Mohawk Area Public Health Coalition (MAPHCO).

A second grant, currently called simply “**1422**,” funds the work of helping communities develop strategies for chronic disease prevention. Similar to the Mass in Motion initiative, basic preventative habits, such as moving more and eating better, are central to this work. Rachel Stoler will be rolling out this grant almost exclusively. Partnership For Youth and the Planning Department will together hire a single full time person to assist with 1422 and with transportation planning. Amada Doster will move into a role of giving technical assistance to substance abuse prevention coalitions across state, and a new full-time Prevention Strategies Coordinator will take her place.

Going forward, Bob Dean will manage FCCIP and Ted Harvey will work primarily on emergency preparedness planning utilizing various funding sources. Linda said the staff is discussing the impacts of these large grants on the finance department as it may be necessary to bring in more help. Pat Auchard has a good sense of what it will take to properly manage the financial aspect of these awards.

5. Business Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of Meeting

Linda summarized the Conference Committee’s FY16 Budget Report with members (see emailed handout), and reported on a FRTA end-of-year reconciliation invoice for snow removal and for 60% of the cost for Transit Center window replacement. Members discussed payment options and lease language.

Next meeting: August 9th

John P. moved to adjourn the meeting; Sam seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:14 p.m.

Documents Distributed:

- Agenda
- Minutes from 5/27/15 meeting
- Letter to and response from the law offices of Ms. Carolyn Elefant, dated May 28, 2015 and June 9, 2015 respectively.
- *FY2016 Conference Committee Budget* (emailed copy, dated July 9.)