



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Executive Committee —MINUTES

Date & Time:	Thursday, January 7, 2016/ 4 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
- Kevin Fox, Colrain Representative
- Bill Martin, Greenfield Representative
- Sam Lovejoy, Regional Planning Board Representative
- John Paciorek, Regionally Elected Representative

Staff Members:

- Pat Auchard, Finance Dir
- Rebekah Boyd-Owens, Administrative Services Coordinator
- Bob Dean, Director of Regional Services
- Peggy Sloan, Director of Planning & Development

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA:

1. Adopt 11/19/15 minutes

Bill opened the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

Sam moved to adopt the 11/8/15 minutes. Bill M. seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

2. Draft Budget Update

Pat A. reported that we're looking at a regional assessment increase of 1.9 %, and a 9% increase to the statutory assessment. She attributed much of the increase to the following: insurance rates up by between 6 and 6.9%; (due to prescription drugs, Kevin F. added); a lease uptick; a 2% increase for staff salaries; and finance department plans to hire a part-time person to help with new grants. The electric bill will be higher because of repairs to solar array. She added that the addition of new staff last year offsets budgetary increases.

Bill M. said a regional services assessment of 1.9% is very good. Pat said much of this grant money is multi-year, which allows us to plan. What we don't know is how the Governor's 9C cuts will affect our grant funds, she added.

3. Whately Road Action Continuation

No action except for continuation is necessary for the relocation of Egypt Road, Bob reported, as Whately is still talking to MassDOT. Bill opened the Whately Road hearing at 4:08 p.m.

Sam L. moved a continuation of the Egypt Rd. relocation to the next Executive Committee meeting. Kevin F. seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Sam moved to close the hearing at 4:09p.m. Bill seconded; motion passed unanimously.

4. FCECS Update

The county emergency radio system made giant strides a month ago after consultants came up with retiming of entire system, but some specific trouble spots remain, reported Bill P. The Erving site has been on “receive only” for many months. He said the system will need eventual replacement not too far down the road.

5. Intervenor Status Application/Pipeline Update

Peggy S. reported that intervenor request was filed with FERC on Jan 1. If granted, intervenor status will give the FRCOG standing in court to address issues and concerns we might have. Bill P. said intervenor status gives us the right to cross examine testimony and ask questions not being asked. Peggy will receive filings from all other regional filers, which will give staff a sense of their concerns.

Bill M. asked if Peggy can explain the rate increase of Berkshire Gas for pipeline construction. Peggy said she is still learning about their complicated financing as she has been focusing primarily on environmental and safety issues. Berkshire Gas may be able to pass on costs to the company for pipeline building to rate payers, she said.

FRCOG is considering petitioning for a hearing, and though the odds are low that we’d get one, it gives us an opportunity to highlight the importance of this, said Peg. Sam suggested such a petition gets FERC’s attention, adding that the agency is supposed to look at alternatives. The hearing would make FERC talk about need.

Peggy said FRCOG has budgeted \$10,000 for the services of the Attorney Elephant, which will include roughly \$2,000 for the public hearing petition. She is very cost effective, said Peg. She feels that if granted the hearing, the state’s Attorney General (AG) and others would want to participate somehow, and they presumably could be invested parties.

Consensus among members was that Peggy and the Attorney should move forward on requesting a hearing, since it was still within the budget. Kevin said he wanted to see the public hearing request beforehand, however, asking if that was possible in the short timeframe. Peggy said she can try. Kevin expressed discomfort with the fact that the committee approved a 6-page intervenor request “as written” which was expanded into a 26-page doc. Peggy said that comments and changes from the attorney were anticipated. Sam agreed. Peg added that the authority to revise and expand the document was requested in the meeting and by the attorney. (The possibility of additions to the document was stated by Peggy and is reflected in the 11/8/15 meeting minutes).

Members asked if Atty. Elephant could attend the hearing without staff. Peggy said yes, but another Executive Committee meeting would be required to discuss funding her representation at the hearing, likely to be held in Washington D.C. if granted by FERC.

Bill P. suggested staff could find out if the AG will also be petitioning FERC for a hearing if members wished, and can reach out to other agencies to be sure they’re involved. Members wondered if Atty.

Elefant is representing others. Peg reiterated that she's been hired by us to help the eight Franklin County municipalities in response to their request for FRCOG help for adequate legal support.

Sam said making a hearing request early is important. John P. said if petitioning can be done within the budget, we should ask her to do it. Peggy said she will find out who else Atty. Elefant represents and if we can withdraw the request for a hearing if it requires too much money. All members agreed that we should proceed.

6. Personnel Projects Update

Personnel Policy Update

A preliminary draft of the Personnel Policy was sent to the administrative staff for initial review. Staff sent the consultant questions and comments, which are being discussed with the consultant. The Policy will be reviewed by the Personnel Committee starting in late February.

Wage and Classification Study

The Wage and Classification Study will likely be complete in February and presented to the Personnel Committee. The Committee will share the results and finding of the Study with Council members at its April meeting.

7. Business not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance

Members briefly discussed reaction to the recent MBI statement.

Bill M. moved to adjourn the meeting. Sam seconded. The meeting closed at 5:00 p.m.

Documents Distributed:

- Agenda
- Minutes of 10/8/15 meeting
- Draft FY17 Budget
- *Motion to Intervene of the Franklin Regional Council of Government*, dated 1/4/2016.
- *FERC Certificate of Service*, (notification that the Motion to Intervene had been electronically served) dated 1/4/16