



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Finance Committee — *MINUTES*

Date /Time:	Thursday July 16, 2015 / 5:00 p.m.
Location:	JW Olver Transit Center, 12 Olive Street Greenfield, MA – Downstairs Meeting Room
Facilitator:	Lynn Sibley, Chair

ATTENDEES:

- Lynn Sibley, Chair, Whately Representative
- John Payne, Shelburne Representative
- John O'Rourke, Conway Representative
- Michele Giarusso, Leyden Representative

STAFF:

- Linda Dunlavy, Executive Director
- Pat Auchard, Finance Director
- Rebekah Boyd-Owens, Administrative Services Coordinator

1. Adopt 5/27/15 minutes.

Lynn Sibley opened the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Michele moved the minutes of 5/27/15 as amended (see page 4). Lynn seconded. Approved unanimously.

2. FY15 Budget Amendments

FCECS

See handout, specifically the line for wages overspent by \$573.

Michele moved to take \$573 from the operating section of the budget to cover additional staff time needed for FCECS system problems that required going out to bid for a new maintenance vendor. John O. seconded. The motion passed unanimously

FCCIP

FCCIP staff identified a travel line budgetary over-expenditure of \$549 due to the program having a greater number of smaller residential permits taken out and fewer commercial permits issued than expected which resulted in more driving to various far-flung sites.

Michele moved that the FCCIP travel line be increased by \$549, to be funded from the programs' fund balance. John Payne seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

3. Carry Forward of funds into FY16

FCECS Work in Progress

Money from various FCECS accounts (see handout) is requested for carry over to complete radio system antenna replacement work begun in May. The work was delayed while waiting for owners of the cell towers to give maintenance and repair personnel permission to move and replace the equipment.

Michele moved that we carry forward \$20, 958.72 from FY15 to FY16 and to further amend the budget correspondingly. John O. seconded. Motion passed unanimously

The resulting balance remaining in the FY15 FCECS budget would be \$10,398.

Special Project: Pipeline

Linda reminded the committee of the Council appropriation of \$15,000 for pipeline project work. Staff have hired attorney Carolyn Elefant to assist the FRCOG with reviewing FRCOG testimony, submissions to FERC regarding the pipeline Environmental Impact Statement, filing for intervener status and review of the EIS when completed.

Attorney Elefant has been retained for a flat fee of \$10,000 but we have not yet paid any invoices for her services and thus request a carry forward of \$10,000 for that contractual obligation.

Special Project: Personnel Policy

Linda told members that we have yet to receive any bills from the Collins Center, the agency that is assisting with the creation of the new personnel policy. Staff expects to have the draft completed by next month, and thus, request to carry forward that \$10,000. (See handout.)

Special Project: Pay Classification Study

FRCOG has used \$5,000 for this project already and had hoped to use FY15 money as much as possible, Linda explained. We request a carry forward of \$5, 000. (See handout.)

John Payne made a motion to carry forward from FY15 to FY16 the amounts requested for special projects [above: \$10,000 for a pipeline legal review; \$10,000 for a personnel policy update; and 5,000 for the pay classification study]. John O. seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

4. Year-end Updates

Pat reported that she feels positive about the year-end numbers, (see FY15 Preliminary Year End handout).

Other Post Employment Benefit (OPEB) funding

Because there’s been no retirement assessment this year to the state, the FRCOG’s cognizant agency — the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) — has suggested that rather than letting the indirect rate dip down, the FRCOG should put the money budgeted for the retirement assessment into OPEB. Linda explained that the indirect at end of the fiscal year would be level-funded if we put another \$100,000 into Vanguard-OPEB account, plus we could meet the need of MassDOT’s request.

Lynn S. noted she remembers an earlier conversation wherein the committee agreed that if they didn't have to pay into the retirement system, this was what they'd recommend doing. We will have another \$80,000 to invest in FY15 said Linda. The \$100,000 will be additional, to keep the indirect level funded said Linda. The unfunded liability is just under \$2 million.

John P. asked if there was any further word on proposed legislation to require retirement assessments of Regional Planning Agencies (RPAs) and Councils of Governments (COGs). Linda reported that the only news was that a senator from Lowell has said he will champion RPAs and push for no assessment going forward. RPAs continue to receive bills and not pay them, she said. We're the only RPA that built a possible assessment into the budget, she added. Lynn expressed some trepidation around the possibility of a proposal being crafted to make up for the last 50 years of RPAs not paying assessments.

Franklin County Cooperative Inspection Program (FCCIP) Fee for Service Program Report

Staff reported that our estimate of the ratio of residential to commercial permits was incorrect when planning for the year, there was no increase to the municipal assessments, and we waived fees for municipal projects, resulting in the program ending \$40,000 in the red, and requiring use of \$40,000 of reserve.

FRCOG has reduced FCCIP staffing beginning July 16, 2015, and may make more significant staffing reductions going forward. Workshare use is another possible option for cost reduction: This involves an agreement among a like group of full-time employees who propose a cut in hours to the Mass Department of Labor (DOL). With the state's approval the employees with reduced hours receive unemployment benefits without having to go to the unemployment office. A workshare program shares a reduction of staffing and the DOL likes it because it is not dealing with a layoff, and we're retaining our staff.

John P. asked how the program could manage with people not working a full 40 hours per week. Linda explained that they're still quite busy, overseeing the inspections and issuance of low-revenue-generating permits. If we carry out staff reductions in winter, when permit activity is the lowest, that would help.

In response to increased demand by the city, FCCIP will increase the assessment for plumbing and electrical permitting services for Greenfield this year, Pat told members.

FRTA Lease Payment

The FRTA has billed the FRCOG for \$2500 more than expected for FY15. Of that, \$900 is for snowplowing required this winter, and \$1600 was our share of a window replacement (the window is in the FRTA space). According to our lease, FRCOG pays 55% of the cost for care of the premises. Though "premises" is not defined in the lease, it appears to refer to the space FRCOG actually uses. The lease further states that the landlord is responsible for the building's structure. Thus, staffs' current understanding of the agreement is that the FRCOG is not actually responsible for the cost of the window. Staff has requested legal help for clarification.

Linda plans to write a letter to the FRTA asking about the ambiguous language in the lease. FRTA has until September 30 to reconcile books. We've paid the \$900, Pat added, saying that she's putting the balance of the bill into an accounts payable account; if we don't pay it, it goes into the general account, but we can pay it if we have to.

5. New Grants and potential impact on Finance

Linda and Pat explained that in two weeks a 10-year, \$900,000-a-year grant (totaling 1.5 million in 10 years) will begin, and along with it, enormous reporting requirements. The Health and Medical Coordinating Coalition (HMCC) grant funds FRCOG's management of public health and regional emergency preparedness work in western Massachusetts. FRCOG is now a host agency to subcontracts with health agencies in 94 towns and four counties. Linda told members that staff may be coming back to them with a request to hire more finance department staff to manage this grant once we have a better sense of the increased workload.

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

John Payne asked about his proposal that permitting fees for small farms be waived. Linda told members that she had brought the idea up with the building inspectors, but that the advisory committee hasn't met yet to discuss the proposal.

John O. moved to adjourn the meeting. Michelle seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 6:09 p.m.

DOCUMENTS DISTRIBUTED:

- Agenda
- Minutes of May 27, 2015 Meeting
- FCECS Budget Amendment Carry Forward Request
- FCCIP Budget Amendment Request
- Regional Preparedness Program Carry Forward Request
- Administration — Regional Services Carry Forward Request
- Regional Services Carry Forward Request
- FRCOG General Fund Report, FY15, Preliminary Year End
- FRCOG Fee-For-Service Program Reports, Preliminary, FY15
- FRCOG Municipal Fee Service, FY15, Preliminary Year End
- FY15 Vanguard-OPEB Trust Fund