



To: FRCOG Council
From: Sub-Committee Chairs and Linda Dunlavy
Date: July 14, 2016
Subject: Committee and Executive Director Updates for
7/21/16 Council Meeting

Nominating Committee Slate:

The Nominating Committee of Bill Perlman, Gordon Fretwell and Brian Noble will meet on July 18 and will present a slate of officers at the Council meeting.

Council Chair Update

November Election

John Paciorek has decided that he will not pursue re-election of his Executive Committee seat after many years of valued service to the FRCOG. Nomination papers for the open seat are out now. We know of one person running for the seat so far – Jay DiPucchio of Montague and former Franklin County Administrator. To get on the November ballot, prospective candidates must get 150 registered signatures by August 1.

Next Council Meeting Dates:

FY17 Council meeting dates are:

October 20

January 26

April 20

All will be held in the Transit Center.

Honoring Bill Allen

For those that haven't recently been to the Transit Center, the downstairs meeting room has been dedicated to Bill Allen. Bill passed away last year after decades of community service to Greenfield and the County. He was the County Engineer in the 1990s and sat on the Franklin Regional Planning Board for many years. He spent many hours in that room and rooms like it offering his advice, knowledge and wisdom.

Executive Committee Update

The Executive Committee met with Bill Ennen, the new broadband liaison to unserved communities, about the potential of becoming a FRCOG employee and/or using FRCOG office space, at Bill's request. The Executive Committee was willing to support both but Bill decided against FRCOG employment and hopes to find an office in an unserved community.

The Committee received a presentation from FRCOG staff, Kat Allen, about the November marijuana ballot question, which you will receive in a few minutes. The Committee also received a presentation about the newly revamped flu clinics facilitated by Lisa White, RN from the CPHS. And the Committee discussed with staff a letter to our Congressional delegation outlining how the FERC process could be improved. This letter is being drafted now.

Executive Director Update

Broadband

As you may have read in the paper, the New Salem Town Meeting asked the FRCOG to come to a Select Board meeting to discuss the FRCOG's involvement and activities with broadband. The FRCOG has been involved in the effort to bring broadband to all of Franklin County and western MA since the late 1990s. A review of our work and effort is long. While there is still more to do to fully and finally bring broadband to all of our residents, I am proud of our efforts. Here is the recap of work that the FRCOG had a leading or substantive role.

- Late 1990s: FRCOG participated in a complaint filed with MA Department of Telecommunications & Energy about Verizon. The purpose was to improve services and equipment in the region, and the intention was to argue that broadband is a right, not a privilege and Verizon should be compelled to expand broadband. Complaint failed.
- Early 2000s: With Berkshire Connect & Pioneer Valley Connect, we were part of the team that completed the first broadband availability database for the region that clearly demonstrated that western MA was significantly less served than the rest of MA. Conducted a demand aggregation hoping to bundle broadband expenditure to prove to the private sector that our region was worth investing in. Minimally successful. This effort and the DTE complaint proved that public investment of some level was required to solve the broadband problem.
- 2005: MassDOT begins project to expand Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technology on I-91 corridor, which will include fiber for the operation of ITS components. FRCOG advocates that additional fiber and conduit should be included in the project for broadband expansion purposes. Congressman Olver supports. The constructed project included excess fiber for commercial use and empty conduit for future expansion: \$47m; serves as the backbone for the middle mile network and eventual last mile solution; recognized as an innovative model in the National Broadband Plan.
- 2006: FRCOG applies for and receives a grant to study how public investment could stimulate private investment to bring broadband to unserved sub-regions. Study presented to legislative delegation and Governor's staff and leads to crafting of legislation to create and fund a MA broadband office.

- 2007: Massachusetts Broadband Institute formed and funded with \$40million. Linda Dunlavy appointed to board by Governor Patrick and has recently been reappointed for a third term by Governor Baker. Linda's role on the board has been to represent and advocate for the needs of un(der)served communities.
- 2010-2014: MB123 Middle mile network constructed with over 1,200 miles of fiber optic installed in western and northcentral Massachusetts. During this period the FRCOG sat on consultant selection committees and provided technical assistance to the MBI.
- 2013: FRCOG uses DLTA grant funds to hire a telecom and municipal services expert to study how the middle mile network and CAI fiber drops can be used by municipalities to improve broadband connectivity among municipal departments. Conducts a cooperative bid for broadband services – participants save, on average, 30%.
- 2014: FRCOG works with MBI and legislative delegation to secure additional funding for a last mile solution – Legislature authorizes \$50m.
- 2015: Many towns choose a FTTH solution, which will be far more expensive than the last mile state funds secured. As a result, it is anticipated that municipalities will need to finance the difference. FRCOG hires a municipal financing expert to help towns understand financing options and impacts. Expert holds Town Treasurer/Finance Forums in Spring 2015 and meets one-on-one with municipal finance committees and other town officials.
- 2016: FRCOG providing assistance to Governor's team as requested to move the project from "pause" to rapid deployment.

Community Compact Projects

The Town of Buckland is working with the FRCOG Planning Department to create a housing plan that will identify and address housing needs in town. A committee has met twice with staff to begin the process, and is currently working on drafting a public survey for residents to provide input into the plan. The survey results, along with data collected for the plan and additional outreach to housing stakeholders, will help the committee develop recommendations that the Town and other organizations, such as the Senior Center, can work towards to help meet the current future housing needs in Buckland. For more information, contact Alyssa Larose, alarose@frcog.org.

In addition to the projects reported last quarter, we have received additional Community Compact funding to assist Sunderland and Erving with financial management best practices, to write an Open Space and Recreation Plan for Montague, and to develop a regional IT Best Practices template that will be customized for Conway.

In total, fourteen Franklin County towns have taken steps to adopt and implement finance-related best practices under the Community Compact Program. Among them, Ashfield, Buckland, Leverett, Deerfield and Rowe are formulating financial policies; Charlemont, Colrain,

Heath, Leyden, Shelburne, Erving and Sunderland are developing capital improvement programs; Hawley is retooling its budget documents; and Conway seeks to move toward long range forecasting. Eleven of these towns are already receiving consulting assistance from FRCOG's Municipal Finance Specialist, Joe Markarian, and are at various stages of project completion. Projects in the remaining three towns are expected to begin this month.

There is no cost to towns that participate in the Community Compact program and, with the successful completion of a project, points are earned toward future State grant programs. The current FY17 budget does include funding for the Community Compact program and it is our current understanding that all towns can apply for new Community Compact projects soon. We expect there will be some changes, clarifications and expansion of the program and will notify towns as soon as we learn more.

Communities That Care Coalition Substance Abuse Prevention

The Communities That Care Coalition has recently completed its comprehensive Community Action Plan, which is available at www.communitiesthatcarecoalition.org and includes dozens of strategies that towns, schools, and community service agencies are implementing to successfully reduce youth substance use and improve youth health. The coalition is now gearing up for an eventful fall, planning a press conference to share the latest Teen Health Survey data, a LifeSkills training for middle school health teachers, a meeting (and report) for school administrators on best-practices in school policies related to substance use, and education around the effects of marijuana on the developing brain. For more information contact Kat Allen 774-3167 x 119 or kallen@frcog.org.

Communities That Care Mass in Motion

FRCOG staff are conducting focus groups with seniors, young people, and residents of housing complexes to learn more about how and where people access food, barriers to access, and factors that facilitate food access. Focus groups will be completed this summer, and will be used to inform work on various food access-related projects. For more information contact Rachel Stoler 774-3167 x 121 or rstoler@frcog.org or Jessica McMillin 774-3167 x 136 jmcmillin@frcog.org

Complete Streets Funding Program

The [Massachusetts Complete Streets Funding Program](#) is currently underway. A number of towns in Franklin County have passed Complete Streets policies, and several are currently pursuing technical assistance funding to compile Complete Streets Prioritization Plans. Any towns that would like further information on the program or are interested in participating please contact Elizabeth Giannini at giannini@frcog.org.

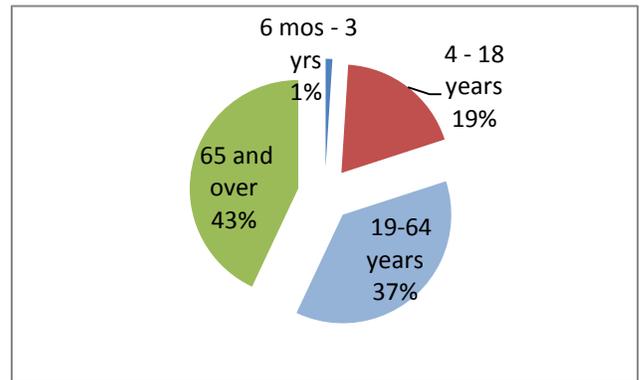
Connecticut River Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan Update

Work to update the Corridor Management Plan (CMP) for the Connecticut River National Scenic Byway is completed and the final document will be posted to the FRCOG website in the coming weeks. This collaborative effort between the FRCOG and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) assesses cultural, historic, natural, scenic and other resources along the

Scenic Byway and makes recommendations for protection and promotion efforts. The updated Plan provides recommendations to guide future projects and funding pursuits. For more information contact Elizabeth Giannini at Giannini@frcog.org.

Cooperative Public Health Service

The health district's Public Health Nurse reports a very successful flu season, despite major changes to how the program operates through DPH. CPHS held 6 family clinics, 4 senior clinics, 2 Emergency Dispensing Site drill clinics, and vaccinated 168 walk-ins at our regular clinic times in Charlemont, Deerfield, Conway, and Shelburne. The district is now able to accept all insurances and supports the vaccination program through those revenues.



Ages and Number of 2015/16 CPHS Flu Vaccine Recipients – 919 people in total vaccinated

Through our five year FDA Food Safety grant, the CPHS health district held a low-cost ServeSafe food safety training for residents and food service employees of member towns on June 21 at Berkshire East. Residents of Greenfield, Ashfield, Charlemont, Shelburne, Hawley, Conway, Buckland and Leyden attended.

Cooperative Purchasing Program

Our towns have aggregated their needs and locked in over \$7.7 million in contracts for summer Highway products and services for FY17. Fuel bid prices came in at an average of 25% lower than last year, which will save towns thousands of dollars. Towns should be making any adjustments to the amount of Sand, Salt and Liquid De-Icing materials they need for the upcoming winter as those bids will be going out in August for September opening. The Salt bid is a combined bid with Hampshire Council of Governments which gives us more material to aggregate and achieve better volume pricing.

If you have any questions about FRCOG cooperative contracts, contact Andrea Woods at bids@frcog.org. Reference materials you may need during the year for prevailing wage rates, bidding thresholds, emergency procurement guidance, and contract prices are available on the Purchasing Program's webpage at <http://frcog.org/bids>.

DLTA Local Technical Assistance Program

DLTA is the state grant funding that allows the FRCOG to help towns with traditional planning projects and projects that promote regionalization. A complete list of these projects was included in last quarter's update. The FY17 budget submitted by the Legislature included \$2.8m for DLTA, which was level-funded from FY16. Unfortunately, the Governor has vetoed this line. Advocacy efforts are underway to override the veto and restore the funding. In the meantime, FY16 DLTA projects will continue through the end of December.

Economic Development Planning Program

The 2016 Greater Franklin County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Annual Report was released on June 1st. This first update to the 2015 CEDS Plan includes new regional data and updates on key economic development activities underway. The report was submitted to the US Economic Development Administration to maintain the region's eligibility for certain federal funding programs. FRCOG continues to participate in a Tri-State economic development initiative with planning and economic development agencies in southeastern Vermont and southwestern New Hampshire. As part of this work, FRCOG presented at a meeting of Tri-State Region stakeholders, including workforce and business development leaders, held in May in Brattleboro. A report that identifies shared assets and challenges among the three CEDS Plans in the Tri-State Region and a provides a summary of lessons learned when a multi-state region loses a large employers will be issued later this year, perhaps through a press event in September. For more information, contact Jessica Atwood, Economic Development program Manager at jatwood@frcog.org or (413)774-3167 x123.

Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership (MTWP) Project

The intent of the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership Project (MTWP) is to bring recognition and additional financial and technical resources to the 21 municipalities in northwestern Massachusetts, primarily via special designation by the U.S. Forest Service and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to:

- Increase economic development related to forestry and natural resource based tourism
- Support the expansion of sustainable forestry practices and forest conservation on private lands
- Improve fiscal stability and sustainability of the municipalities

In addition to a Plan that was completed in December 2015, a Draft Business Plan, Potential Governance Structure and Draft State legislation have been developed. Meetings with each Franklin County town's Select Board have been completed to discuss the recommendations of the Plan and to determine town interest in proceeding with State legislation to create a Special Designation for the 21-town region. To date, ten of the eleven communities in Franklin County have provided letters of support for proceeding with State legislation for a Special Designation for the 21-Town region. Eight of the ten towns in Berkshire County have also provided letters of support. A final Draft of the proposed legislation has been submitted to our State legislators. For more information, contact Peggy Sloan at psloan@frcog.org. The Plan is available on our website (www.frcog.org).

Orange Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) Update

FRCOG Planning staff have been assisting the Orange Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee since November 2014 to update the Orange OSRP. The last update was completed in 2008 and recently expired. Having an up-to-date plan enables the town to apply for state grants for land conservation and recreation facility improvements. Accomplishments since the last plan

July 2016 FRCOG Council Meeting Updates



include completion of the boathouse at the Riverfront Park, improvements to Butterfield Park, the permanent protection of over 2,000 acres of farm and forestland, and a continued focus on downtown revitalization and riverfront recreation. A public forum was held on June 27, 2016 to present the final draft plan and to prioritize the Town's open space and recreation objectives for the next seven years. The FRCOG will submit the plan to the Division of Conservation Services for review and approval in mid-July. For more information contact Alyssa Larose at alarose@frcog.org.

Proposed Kinder Morgan-TGP NED Gas Pipeline Project

On April 22, 2016 Tennessee Gas Pipeline (TGP) Company suspended further work on the NED pipeline and requested that FERC take no further action. On May 11, 2016 the FRCOG submitted a letter to FERC requesting that FERC deny or dismiss with prejudice the Application for the KM-TGP NED Pipeline. On May 23, 2016, KM-TGP formally withdrew its Application to FERC. The FRCOG plans to send a follow-up letter to our Federal Legislators with recommendations to improve the FERC process. For more information contact Linda Dunlavy at lindad@frcog.org or Peggy Sloan at psloan@frcog.org

Regional Brownfields Program

With its sixth Brownfields grant from the U.S. EPA, FRCOG is conducting environmental site assessments in Bernardston, Buckland, Charlemont, Greenfield, Heath and Monroe. This work can include historical research and reconnaissance of a site to assess its potential for contamination, assessing the impact of potential contamination through testing of soil, groundwater or building material samples, and if contamination is found a remediation plan to clean-up the site. Completed this past quarter was an interior hazardous materials survey and abatement and demolition cost estimate for the wood portion of the former Ramage Paper Mill in Monroe. The Town of Monroe, FRCOG and other partners are working together to identify next steps and potential funding sources to fund abatement and demolition. Also initiated this past quarter was a Phase II sampling and testing for contamination at a former saw mill site on Martindale Road in Bernardston. For more information about the program, please contact Peggy Sloan at 774-3167 x133 or psloan@frcog.org.

Deerfield Tree Inventory

A public tree inventory in Deerfield is slated to begin in July 2016. The third such inventory in Franklin County, this project will geo-locate public trees and gather data such as genus, species, height, spread and other information. Deliverables will include a GIS data layer, printed maps and infographics. These materials can be used by the town to help track future tree planting and maintenance, to raise awareness with the public on the many benefits of trees and to apply for grants. A summary of findings from the 2015 Montague tree inventory is available [here](#). For more information, contact Mary Chicoine at maryc@frcog.org.

Using Low Impact Development (LID) Techniques to Manage Stormwater Runoff in Greenfield

This project, which is funded by the Town of Greenfield, Greening Greenfield, and grants the FRCOG received from the MassDEP and the Massachusetts Environmental Trust, is winding down. The project included retrofitting the 2 acre town-owned Chapman-Davis parking lot and Olive Street with rain gardens to remove pollutants from stormwater runoff that flows into the storm drain system that empties into the Green River and installing a rain garden at the Pearl Rhodes Elementary School in Leyden. A public awareness campaign will be launched in August to inform residents about specific things they can do to reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff, such as reducing or eliminating the use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers on their lawns and participating in the *Greenscape Challenge*.

Through the Greenscape Challenge, residents and businesses will be encouraged to employ techniques in their yards, gardens and other outdoor spaces to decrease stormwater runoff, improve water quality and the environment in general. A link to the Greenscape Challenge and a toolkit will be available on the FRCOG's Natural Resources Planning webpage in late July 2016. Other outreach materials include interpretive signs that will be installed this year at the Chapman-Davis lot and Olive Street, posters and fact sheets. For more information, contact Kimberly Noake MacPhee, P.G. at 774-3167 x130 or kmacphee@frcog.org.

Regional Preparedness Program

IT has been a busy quarter in the regional preparedness program. Some of the highlights include the first three meetings of the new Western Mass Health and Medical Coordinating Coalition, which has begun work on a regional coordination plan for emergencies including hospitals, public health, community health centers, EMS, and long term care facilities.

In July, the Franklin County Citizen Corps teams (MRC, CERT, and DART), held training for new members and provided first aid at the Green River Festival campground.

RPP staff also worked with four fire districts to submit a grant for state funding to explore shared fire services, and completed work with the towns of Orange, New Salem, Warwick, Wendell, and Erving on crafting a new inter-municipal agreement governing the shared use of Orange's ambulance service.

The poster features a central graphic of a water drop containing a list of pollutants: TRASH, GREASE, PESTICIDES, MOTOR OIL, CAR CLEANING PRODUCTS, FERTILIZER, SOLVENTS, PAINT, HOUSEHOLD CLEANSERS, PET WASTE, SOIL, GRASS CLIPPINGS, LEAVES, INDUSTRIAL BYPRODUCTS, ROAD SALT, HEAVY METALS, HERBICIDES, ANTIFREEZE, SEDIMENT, MERCURY, CIGARETTES, NITROGEN, and WOOD ASH. Below the list, the text reads: 'Connect the drops! When it's raining, POLLUTION from our homes, yards, cars, and streets gets washed into our streams and rivers by stormwater. You can make a difference by decreasing or eliminating chemical use and by disposing of materials carefully. Act for cleaner rivers!' The poster includes logos for Greenfield, FRCOG, and MassDEP, along with contact information and a QR code.

Traffic Counting Program

The FRCOG performs traffic counts, free of charge for all Franklin County communities who request them, on a first-come, first-served basis. There is still room in our schedule to conduct additional counts this season. The FRCOG has the ability to measure traffic volumes, vehicle classification, vehicle speeds and vehicle turning movements (intersection counts). Count requests should be submitted to Laurie Scarbrough at 413-774-3167 x 139 or lscarbrough@frcog.org.

Transportation Improvement Program

The Draft 2017-2021 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is currently undergoing a 30-day public review and comment period. The TIP is a prioritized, multi-year program for the implementation of highway, bridge, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit projects in the Franklin County region. Any project intended to receive federal transportation funds must, by federal regulation, be listed in a TIP that is financially constrained and includes broad public participation. The public comment period is open until July 24, 2016. The TIP is available for review on our website. For more information, or to submit comments, please contact Maureen Mullaney at MMullaney@frcog.org.

Transportation Planning Unified Planning Work Program

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is the work plan for the transportation planning staff for the next year. Next year's work program includes projects to create a bicycle tourism plan, conduct mapping for the Mahican-Mohawk Trail, analyze crash data at specific locations, investigate best management practices for addressing stormwater runoff, and evaluate the use and demand for electric vehicle charging stations, among others. The UPWP is currently undergoing a public review and comment period that will open until July 24, 2016. The UPWP is available on our website. For more information, or to submit comments, please contact Maureen Mullaney at MMullaney@frcog.org.

Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council (WRHSAC)

The FRCOG is currently working on three projects for WRHSAC. For more information, please contact Patricia Smith at psmith@frcog.org.

Disaster Debris Management Plan Template Development

Planning staff are developing a template for a local/regional Disaster Debris Management Plan for use by the other Western MA municipalities and counties based on the *Franklin County Disaster Debris Management Plan* that was developed with DLTA support in December 2014 and accepted by FEMA on July 17, 2015.

Children in Disasters Family Reunification Project

Staff are working with the other Western MA RPAs on a WRHSAC funded multi-phase project to address the needs of children in disasters. The current project is to develop a Family Reunification Plan Checklist and Template which any department or organization can adopt and adapt to meet their reunification plan needs.

Franklin and Hampshire Counties Regional Shelter Plan Update

Finally, FRCOG Planning staff are working with the Regional Emergency Planning Committees of Franklin and Hampshire Counties to update and complete their Regional Shelter Plans, originally developed with WRHSAC assistance in 2013. In Franklin County, the following four potential regional shelters have been identified: Fisher Hill Elementary School in Orange; Mohawk Trail Regional High School/ Middle School in Buckland; Greenfield Middle School; and Turners Falls High School in Montague. Site visits with a team of emergency preparedness experts and local officials were conducted at each of the sites and detailed floor plans for shelter activities are being finalized for inclusion in the plan.

Personnel Committee Update

Personnel Policy Update

The Personnel Policy was presented for First Reading at the last Council meeting. It is the Committee's hope that the Council will accept the Policy for Second Reading and endorsement. Most changes to the Policy since First Reading are relatively minor edits and formatting. Changes to highlight are:

- Longevity (page 13) – In First Reading this policy was written so that the Longevity payment was added to each employee's base salary. This would be difficult to implement administratively. Staff have asked that Longevity be an annual bonus, as was previous practice.
- Alternative Health Insurance Payment (page 14) – This policy was rewritten to be clearer and a small administrative change was made.

Five new policies are presented for First Reading (and are included in the body of the full Personnel Policy):

- Retiree Health Insurance (page 16) – edits have been reviewed by legal counsel and the policy complies with current court cases.
- Domestic Violence Leave (page 22) – this is a new state law that needs to be added to the Policy; law provides some discretion about type of leave that can be taken.
- Access and Use of Telecommunications System (page 30)
- Social Networking Policy (page 32)
- Mobile Devices Provided by the FRCOG (page 32)

All of these sections will be reviewed by the Personnel Committee on 7/18. Any changes after review by the Committee on 7/18 will be brought to the Council on 7/21.

Wage and Classification Study

The Wage and Classification Study is complete. The project resulted in:

- A market survey and wage analysis of like organizations in MA, NH and VT.

- A new grading system that evaluates the level of responsibility, education and experience of every FRCOG staff position.
- A salary range for each grade that matches market conditions and is expanded to accommodate the historical longevity of FRCOG employees.
- A review, updating and evaluation of every FRCOG job description and placement in the new grading system.
- An analysis of every position and its market competitiveness.
- An evaluation of each employee salary based on market competitiveness, performance and longevity.
- A new ongoing plan and process for evaluating job descriptions and ensuring external and internal equity.

Because the Personnel and Finance Committees have been working on wage parity for the last several years, less than a dozen positions need a wage increase to match market conditions and/or to acknowledge performance and longevity. Staff will develop a plan for fixing these salaries, which could take more than one year and in some cases may not begin until FY18, and will work with the Personnel and Finance Committees as necessary to implement. There is no expectation that the salary changes will directly impact membership assessments.

Finance Committee Update

Audit

The Finance Committee met to review the agency's FY15 audit. There were no internal control deficiencies identified and the audited unassigned Fund Balance at year-end was \$463,283.

The management letter identified our need to prepare for significant Single Audit requirement changes that could affect the FRCOG. Pat is currently attending a two-day training. There were two other recommendations in the management letter and both have been implemented.

Accounting Software

Staff received official notice that Fundware support will end as of 12/31/17 so we now have the goal of transitioning to new accounting software at the start of FY18. Finance and Town Accounting staff have already viewed a demonstration of one possible replacement, and they will meet with vendors in the fall to view other possibilities. The Finance Committee will consider the recommendations of staff and inform the Council when a decision has been made.

Fiscal Grant Manger

A job search for this new part-time position did not result in attracting the highly qualified staff we sought. We have left the idea on a back burner but it is doubtful we will hire this position in the current fiscal year and instead have just hired a financial admin support staff person.

FY16 Year End

Reports given to Finance Committee members in early June projected a FY16 surplus of at least \$100,000. The surplus is due to new grants that increased indirect revenues and staffing resignations that left two administrative positions unfilled for part of the fiscal year.