



To: FRCOG Council
From: Sub-Committee Chairs and Linda Dunlavy
Date: July 14, 2017

**Subject: Committee and Executive Director Updates for 7/20/17
Council Meeting**

Nominating Committee

The nominating Committee will recommend a slate of officer at the meeting.

Council Chair Update

FY18 Council Meeting Dates:

July 20, 2017
October 19, 2017
January 25, 2018
April 19, 2018

All meetings are held in the Transit Center.

Sub-Committee Appointments:

We are looking for a few good (wo)men to serve on Council subcommittees and on boards of other organizations for which the FRCOG has appointing responsibility. Openings include:

- Council Subcommittees
 - Finance
 - Personnel
- FRCOG Committees
 - CEDS (regional economic development planning)
 - TPO (regional transportation planning)
 - FCCIP (building, plumbing, wiring inspection)
- Other Organizations
 - FCCDC (small business development and assistance)
 - HRA (housing development)

Executive Committee Update

This quarter the Exec Com did the following:

- Viewed and then held two public hearings for petitions for changes to roads in Whately and Shelburne.
- Authorized a new credit card account for the large purchasing needs when a Purchase Order can't be used and a direct credit line cannot be established. (The card is kept in a safe and requires a supervisor and department head's approval.) We anticipate the major use will be for

purchases under the Health and Medical Coordinating Coalition grant, a program for which we are the sponsoring organization.

- Reviewed FRCOG's role in the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) relicensing of FirstLight's Northfield Mount Herman pumped storage and Turners Falls hydroelectric operations. The Committee supported the idea of using reserves from the FY17 budget to hire a consultant to assist in drafting a framework for a river management plan that includes monitoring, assessment, and mitigation components.
- Reviewed and adopted the FRCOG's OPEB Declaration of Trust
- Submitted a letter to state Treasurer Goldberg's Alcohol Policy Task Force with suggestions for how to improve alcohol rules and regulations and decrease youth drinking.

Executive Director Update

20th Anniversary

On July 1, the FRCOG turned 20 years old and that achievement should be celebrated. Over July and August we will use [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and the FRCOG's web site to remember 20 years of significant municipal, regional, statewide and even national achievements and projects. Please save late afternoon Friday, September 8th for an anniversary party. Details forthcoming. In the meantime, here are the first few highlights of our history that have been posted already...

- July 2: In 2011, the Town of Montague was awarded a loan and subgrant totaling \$330,000 from the FRCOG Brownfields Clean-up Fund. This award financed the clean-up the debris pile from the collapse of burned Building #10 at the former Strathmore Mill.
- July 3: Today's 20th Anniversary Memory: In 2002, FRCOG worked on the creation of the Western Millers River Watershed Growth Management Plan. This project initiated discussions among the



Strathmore Mill before cleanup

Orange, Erving, Warwick, and Wendell Open Space Planning Committees and identified specific community preservation strategies to help the towns develop in a manner that would retain their unique characteristics.

- July 4: Since its inception decades ago, the Franklin County Cooperative Inspection Program has helped hundreds of businesses open and grow. As part of our review of the 20 years of FRCOG's work, today we examine one such project: In 2011, FCCIP inspectors and staff permitted, inspected, and approved the construction of Kringle Candle Company Retail Store and Farm Table Restaurant in Bernardston.
- July 5: From the 20th Anniversary files.. In 2006, FRCOG was chosen by Buckland, Conway and Deerfield to host a shared public health nurse for the two towns. Lisa White, RN has been in this role for over ten years now, and is based out of a home office in the Deerfield Town Hall (pictured). The program has since merged with the Cooperative Public Health Service, and Lisa now serves 11 towns with regular office hours and wellness clinics, home visits, infectious disease control, and close collaboration with the schools.
- July 6: From the 20th Anniversary Files: In 2004 there was concern about bio-terrorism across the nation. Locally, the Boards of Health of Franklin County selected the FRCOG to host the region's



Kringle Candle

new federally-funded public health preparedness coalition. Thirteen years later, the coalition of local public health leaders continues to come together to plan and prepare for a wide variety of public health emergencies, including mosquito-borne disease, pandemic flu, and anthrax.

Advocacy, Boards, Commissions and Committees

Staff had a busy quarter of advocating on behalf of the region and representing Franklin County on statewide and regional boards, commissions and committees.

- Staff presented testimony on a proposed zoning law reform bill at a legislative hearing in Boston.
- Phoebe was appointed by the Governor to the Special Commission on Local and Regional Health, which held its first meeting in June.
- Partnership For Youth staff testified at the Western MA hearing of the Treasurer Goldberg's Alcohol Policy Task Force.
- The FRCOG, in its capacity as facilitator of the regional Community Health Improvement Plan, sponsored a workshop on Legislative Advocacy 101 attended by over 30 people.
- Linda D. submitted an Op Ed to the Recorder describing the FRCOG's input to the Marijuana Policy Committee on behalf of our region.
- Linda D. and Jessica Atwood attended a Workforce Skills Cabinet event. This new effort, co-led by the MA Secretaries of Education, Labor, and Economic Development will focus on workforce skills development specifically catered to regional employment sectors and needs. Franklin County is part of the Pioneer Valley region along with Hampshire and Hampden Counties. Jessica has been asked to sit on the committee that will select a consultant to help the region with this work.
- Congressman Neal visited the FRCOG to receive a special presentation on the demographic data developed by the FRCOG for the Rural Policy Commission and staff used the opportunity to update the Congressman on a variety of other Franklin County issues and projects.
- Linda D. was asked to join the Board of Trustees for the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts (CFWM). In that capacity, Linda helped to organize a CFWM outreach and education event in Greenfield that provided information about CFWM's many grant programs that was attended by nearly 100 area non-profits.
- *See separate entry for FRCOG work related to the Rural Policy Commission.*
- *See separate entry for FRCOG work related to the rehiring of the Chamber's Executive Director.*
- FRCOG staff and FRPB continued to participate in the FERC relicensing process for the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage and Bear Swamp Hydroelectric Facilities.

Annual Report

Wondering what we did for your town in 2016? All of the FRCOG's Town Report entries are posted on the FRCOG's web site, at <http://frcog.org/about/towns/>. These reports combined with the Annual Report that highlights regional activities, projects and advocacy paint a good picture of FRCOG activities in calendar year 2016.

Bicycle Parking Program

The FRCOG Bicycle Parking Program provides bike racks for public use, free of charge, to our member communities. This opportunity is made possible through a contract with MassDOT, which will reimburse the FRCOG for the cost of bike racks through the Federal Highway Administration Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program. Participating Franklin County towns will be able to select the bike racks that they prefer. The racks will be ordered by the FRCOG and delivered to towns on a first come, first-served basis. In order to be able to provide bike racks at no cost, the FRCOG must have a commitment from each participating town that they will be promptly installed. The deadline for bicycle

rack requests has been extended through July 2017. For information on how to receive free bike racks, see the Bicycle Parking Program information page on the FRCOG website or contact Laurie Scarbrough at 413-774-3167 x 139 or lscarbrough@frcog.org.

Bicycle Tourism Plan

The FRCOG continued developing a bicycle tourism plan for Franklin County. The staff established partnerships and undertook outreach with representatives of local recreational bicycling businesses and tourism industry representatives to discuss bicycle tourism opportunities. Staff has developed an inventory of bicycling assets and is completing outreach to businesses that serve tourist and tourism industry representatives in order to identify opportunities for growth. If you would like to participate in the effort, please contact Elizabeth Giannini at Giannini@frcog.org.

Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Projects

FRCOG just completed the Watershed-Based Plan to Maintain the Health and Resiliency of the Deerfield River Watershed. This project was funded by a grant received from the MassDEP's s.319 Nonpoint Source Competitive Grant program and identified many future projects that are eligible for funding from this grant program. The plan also includes recommendations for innovative conservation and water quality protection projects that would restore and help maintain the high quality of the watershed's upland tributary streams and forested areas. FRCOG also reviewed the land use regulations of the 14 watershed towns and included recommendations in the plan for river corridor mapping and management, as well as updates to floodplain bylaws. The plan's strategies emphasize planning and resiliency strategies at the local watershed scale. Over time, as communities within the larger Deerfield River Watershed align their planning and resiliency efforts, the natural resources and critical infrastructure in the communities will be protected, and the watershed as a whole will be healthier and better able to respond to extreme weather events. For more information, contact Kimberly Noake MacPhee, P.G., CFM, at 774-3167 x130 or kmacphee@frcog.org.

Collective Purchasing Program

FRCOG has just completed bidding and contracting for \$6.3 million in Highway products and services for 25 towns for this Spring and the upcoming Fiscal Year 2018. Also, Fuel contracts for Diesel, Gasoline, and Heating Oil for 19 towns and non-profits are in place and total approximately \$1.85 million. Prices for the big commodities such as Asphalt material and Heating Oil is relatively steady from last year. Bids for Road Sand, Salt and Pretreatment Liquid is on deck for early September. The FRCOG Chief Procurement Officer completed 28 bids for school districts and towns outside the Collective Purchasing Program in FY17. Contact Andrea Woods at ext. 104 or bids@frcog.org if you have any questions.

Community Health Improvement Plan

The FRCOG's Regional Community Health Improvement Plan was recently awarded a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Action Acceleration grant to assist schools in improving student intake of nutritious food. To review the scope of work for the consultant we are seeking, or learn more about the CHIP, visit the CHIP web page at frcog.org.

DLTA Local Technical Assistance Program

DLTA is the state grant funding that allows the FRCOG to help towns with traditional planning projects, Community Compact best practices, and projects that promote regionalization. Staff are busy across the region on town-specific projects, including financial management technical assistance, zoning changes, open space and recreation planning, and exploring a regional Human Resources function. Happily, DLTA survived the budget shortfall and has been included in the FY18 budget. Project solicitations for the new

year are expected to occur in the November timeframe. Contact Linda, Bob, Peggy or Phoebe with any questions on these projects.

Economic Development Planning Program

Under its planning partnership grant from the US Economic Development Administration (EDA), staff created the [Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy \(CEDS\) 2017 Annual Report](#). This Annual Report is the second update to the 2015 CEDS Plan. The Report includes recent data on the demographic and economic condition of the region as well as updates on key economic development programs and projects. Through the CEDS planning process, the region maintains its eligibility for select EDA funding programs.

Also available from the FRCOG is the [Franklin County Business Development Resource Guide and information](#) to help businesses be more prepared in case of an emergency. These documents have been shared with Town Clerks, Town Administrators and business groups. And if you know of a business person or an entrepreneur who may be interested, please forward them along. For more information, contact Jessica Atwood, Economic Development Program Manager at jatwood@frcog.org or (413)774-3167 x123.

Franklin County Chamber of Commerce New Executive Director

Linda D. has been Chair of the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce through the retirement of Ann Hamilton after 32 years, a brief strategic planning phase, and the rehiring of a new Executive Director. The FRCOG took a major role during this transition because recognizes that the Chamber has a significant, leadership role to play in the region's economic development, and a strong partnership between the FRCOG and Chamber is critical. The Chamber and its businesses, the region and its municipalities are extremely lucky to welcome Natalie Blais as the Chamber's new Executive Director. Natalie is likely familiar to many of you – she was the Economic Development Specialist for both Congressman John Olver and James McGovern. She knows Franklin County well and helped bring many important Franklin County projects to fruition. Natalie will be fully on board at the Chamber in September.

Franklin County Emergency Communication System replacement

Staff and the FCECS Oversight Committee continue to work on the repair of the existing FCECS system and to develop a long-term replacement plan for the system.

Repair and Maintenance of Existing System:

GPS Timing Clock Replacement Project: In an effort to modernize the Franklin County Emergency Communication System the Oversight Committee applied to the Western Region Homeland Security Committee for and received a grant in the amount of \$67,000 to replace obsolete and failing GPS Timing Clocks at nine locations. The GPS Timing Clocks are vital to ensuring clear communication by timing the release and reception of radio waves in an effort to eliminate interference. This project was awarded to Green Mountain Communications who beat the installation deadline of July 31, 2017 and kept the project on budget. Reports from the field say that the system has improved because of this replacement project. In the near future our vendors will continue to fine tune the system to increase the performance.

System wide Antenna Replacement Project: The FCECS Oversight Committee was advised by Beltronics, the current FCECS radio system maintenance and repair vendor, that we could see a

large improvement in system performance by having an engineering study completed which would specify the correct antenna type and configuration for the system. Beltronics explained through extensive modeling that many of the current antenna type and configurations were a major source of destructive interference which produces the static and garbled communication our public safety professionals hear. An engineering vendor is being procured for this project and installation of the new antennas is tentatively scheduled to being in the fall of 2017.

Long-Term Replacement Plan: The FRCOG sent a letter to the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security asking for Franklin County to be moved to the statewide 800 MHz emergency communication system. This appears to be the most logical, efficient and cost effective path forward although there are many policy, political, financial and technical issues to resolve. EOPSS is cautiously supportive of the concept and invited FRCOG staff, FCECS Committee members, and Franklin County legislators to a meeting to discuss first steps. As a result of the meeting we see our next steps to be:

- Secure radios from Motorola to test coverage of the 800 MHz system in all Franklin County communities. We are working with EOPSS to secure loaner radios now. Once received, every community will receive 4 radios for three days to test coverage. Coverage gaps will be noted and mapped by the FRCOG, which will help to inform infrastructure and network decisions and refine cost estimates.
- Secure letters of support from all FC Boards of Selectmen and police and fire departments.
- Because EOPSS expects A&F will ask about an initial and ongoing financial commitment from Franklin County, we will begin to develop a financial model that we will present to towns in the coming months. Our current working assumption is that the cost of infrastructure and network expansion and maintenance will be the responsibility of the Commonwealth and that Franklin County will need to develop a financing and sustainability plan for all or a portion of user equipment.
- Continue to work with and support EOPSS in their efforts.

Local Officials Workshops

Our June session on Public Records Law Regulatory and Implementation Updates with Michele Randazzo from KP Law was well attended and informative. Slides and handouts are available on the Municipal Resources section of www.frcog.org. A calendar for the fall/winter series of workshops will be available at the Council meeting, and will include sessions on Marijuana Legalization (if a bill is passed into law), Short Term Rentals, the Rural Policy Commission, Elected Official Emergency Preparedness responsibilities, and more. In order to make our local official workshops easier to anticipate and attend, we are moving in FY17 to a format of all sessions taking place on either the first or second Thursday of the month, and always starting at 6 PM.

Mapping of the Mahican Mohawk Trail

The FRCOG is developing an updated and accurate map of the Mahican Mohawk Trail. The Mahican Mohawk Trail is a planned long-distance trail from the Connecticut River to the Hudson River. There are sections of the trail that are already completed and used. There are other sections of the trail that are planned to be built in the future. The FRCOG staff is developing an updated map/brochure of the trail that will provide information on this east west walking route. For further information, please contact Elizabeth Giannini at Giannini@frcog.org.

Mass in Motion 1422 Project

Mass in Motion is a statewide initiative to promote healthy eating and active living in the places people live, learn, work and play. The goal of the Franklin County Mass in Motion program is to increase physical activities and improve the nutrition of Franklin County and North Quabbin residents. As part of the Franklin County Mass in Motion project, the FRCOG planning staff is completing five tasks with funding from the Center for Disease Control's 1422 Grant Program. These tasks are part of a built environment component of the 1422 grant to the Franklin County Mass in Motion Program that is intended to help communities improve walking networks, and promote walking for health and everyday transportation.

One of the 1422 project built environment tasks is to develop walking information and resources for Franklin County in order to encourage more people to walk. Walking maps are currently being developed. The maps are intended to encourage people to walk more by providing short and moderate distance walking loops. The maps build on the previously developed Walk Franklin County maps. Additionally, the FRCOG staff completed assessments in five areas in Franklin County to identify "complete streets" improvements. The complete streets improvements are intended to make these areas more bicycle, pedestrian and transit friendly. The five areas were chosen because they link residential areas and walking destinations were identified during previously completed assessments. For further information, please contact Elizabeth Giannini at Giannini@frcog.org.

Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership (MTWP) Project

The goals of the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership Project (MTWP) are to bring recognition and additional financial and technical resources to the 21 municipalities in northwestern Massachusetts, primarily via special designation by the State Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and U.S. Forest Service 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. All 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 and was filed in January 2017. The legislation has been assigned to the Joint Committee on the Environment, Natural Resources & Agriculture. For more information, contact Peggy Sloan at psloan@frcog.org. The Plan is available on our website (www.frcog.org).

Monroe Ramage Paper Mill Clean-up Demolition Project

Staff continued to support the Town of Monroe with the clean-up and demolition of the wood structure of the former Ramage Paper Mill. The hazardous materials clean-up and the removal of the wooden structure have been successfully completed. The building is located at the launch point of the three whitewater companies so the clean-up and demolition was scheduled to avoid disruption of their business. The hazardous materials and wood structure were removed without incident. The stone wall along the edge of the Deerfield River requires additional stabilization and structural engineers are assessing the work needed. Along with 2017 DLTA Program funds, FRCOG staff have assisted the Town with their public procurement process to hire a contractor, processing payments related to the FRCOG

Brownfields Subgrant and EOEEA grant, and other general support as needed. For more information about the program, please contact Peggy Sloan at 774-3167 x133 or psloan@frcog.org.



Photo of the Former Ramage Paper Mill site with the deteriorating wood structure, May 2015.



Photo of the Former Ramage Paper Mill site during wood structure demolition, May 2017.

Regional Brownfields Program

Under its current EPA grant, the FRCOG has resources to conduct environmental site assessment activities on properties potentially impacted by hazardous substances or petroleum products, pending determination of site eligibility. All funds for assessment of hazardous substances sites have been allocated. However, funding for assessment of petroleum sites is still available. In this past quarter, two new sites were accepted and prioritized for assessment using petroleum funding under this Program. The McKnight Property in Warwick and the Caldwell Road Property in Northfield have been confirmed as eligible for the Program and a Phase I environmental assessment has been conducted for each.

Regional Preparedness Program

The Mohawk Area Public Health Coalition (MAPHCO) held its Annual Meeting at the end of June. It was well-attended and featured two presentations: Risk Communications from Dottie Bernard, MPH, with the Harvard School of Public Health, and the Importance of Legal Preparedness for Local Boards of Health by Gregory Sunshine, JD, a Legal Analyst with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Mr. Sunshine stayed an extra day to present a half-day training on public health emergency law, co-sponsored by MAPHCO and the Western MA Health and Medical Coordinating Coalition (HMCC). Health

and medical stakeholders from throughout western MA attended this event, which covered the basics of local, state, and federal emergency declarations and their implications for legal and emergency response systems; limits of isolation and quarantine and other mandatory controls; and scope of government control, use, and allocation of facilities, equipment, materials, and supplies.

Rural Policy Advisory Commission

The Rural Policy Advisory Commission was established under Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 23A, Section 66 (G.L. c. 23A, § 66) and charged with enhancing the economic vitality of rural communities. The legislation defines rural communities as those with a population density of 500 people per square mile or less, and the Commission as a 15-member body representing rural regions throughout the state. Linda D. is the gubernatorial appointment for Franklin County. The FRCOG helped the Commission understand rural demographics in Massachusetts through the creation of a series of maps and presentation, which will be presented to the Council as this month's special presentation. The Commission selected three areas of focus for the coming year. The three areas selected are: Sewer/Water and Title 5; Rural Service Delivery; and Small Business Support and Job Creation. To have a better understanding of how these focus areas impact quality of life and economic vitality in rural Massachusetts, the FRCOG helped the Commission create a short survey. All Franklin County towns should prioritize the completion of this survey so that the needs and issues of Franklin County are well represented. The survey link has been sent to Town Administrators. Your help in encouraging completion of the survey by your town would be appreciated.

Staff Changes

Jessica McMillin, FRCOG Transportation and Public Health Planner, has left the area to be closer to family members out west. Her great work here will be missed!

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 time available to add counts to our 2017 count calendar. 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, Transportation Planning Engineer, at 413-774-3167 x 139 or lscarbrough@frcog.org.

Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council (WRHSAC)

During the summer of 2017 WRHSAC will begin planning for several large training events to be held in the fall/early winter 2017. Any questions can be directed to Raine Brown at raine@frcog.org.

- Family Reunification Training & Reunification Plan Template – As part of its Children in Disasters program, WRHSAC has been developing a Family Reunification Plan Template. Municipalities, schools, agencies, or any organization working with children, can adopt the template to build their own family reunification plan to implement following an emergency incident or natural disaster. The template provides a detailed action guide to conduct reunification in a safe and respectful manner. The template will be published over the summer. To roll out the plan to the region, WRHSAC will be conducting Reunification Training Workshops. This will be one workshop conducted in three locations to accommodate interested stakeholders throughout the region. The workshops will be held on October 25, 26, & 27. More specifics will be announced soon.

- Behavioral Analysis & Targeted Violence Workshop – This workshop is a follow up to WRHSAC’s highly successful Active Shooter Symposium held in March 2016. Many participants in the symposium identified behavioral analysis and profiling as a topic they’d like to know more about. WRHSAC is again partnering with the FBI, Springfield Office to build a full day workshop on this topic and will also include threat assessment/interview overview. This workshop will be applicable to all first responders, schools, and private sector. The workshop will be held on a yet to be determined date in early December 2017.

At the National Homeland Security Conference, an annual national event, held this year in Buffalo, NY, WRHSAC was commended for its work in training and whole community preparedness, and recognized as enacting best practices in the utilization of the State Homeland Security Program grant.

Finance Committee Update

20th Anniversary Fund Request

As already discussed, the FRCOG turned 20 on July 1 and celebratory activities are underway. The Finance Committee considered a staff request to allocate a small amount of unreserved fund balance for these activities and recommends to the Council that up to \$5,000 be used. The funds will be used primarily for staff time to create a Story Map of the FRCOG’s 20-year history and accomplishments (estimated at \$3,500). Story Map is an interactive mapping program that combines maps with narrative text, images, and multimedia. The remaining funding will be used for a celebratory event currently scheduled for late afternoon on Friday, September 8, 2017.

Proposed Motion: To appropriate up to \$5,000 of Unreserved Fund Balance for FRCOG 20th Anniversary costs.

OPEB Trust Reauthorization

The multiple step process to reauthorize our OPEB Trust in accordance with new M.G.L. and to transfer our Trust funds to the state’s Pension Reserve Investment vehicle moved forward. Our goal is to have all paperwork to the state in time for their October 5 Council meeting.

FY17 Budget Amendments

The Committee took care of a number of year-end clean up budget amendments.

FY18 Budget Amendments

Small tweaks to the FY18 budget to account for known increased expenses such as planned FMLAs were discussed.

Accounting Software:

The Finance Department and Town Accounting staff are in the midst of the conversion process to Abila MIP. Staff have already successfully completed the first payroll using the new software. As reported last quarter, staff worked with New Salem to apply for a Municipal IT grant on behalf of the Town Accounting Program. Happily, we did receive that grant. The grant funds will be used to purchase software enhancements for the Town Accounting Program, and professional technical assistance to continue to enhance and optimize the program’s operations.