



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Executive Committee —MINUTES

Date & Time:	Thursday, December 14, 2017/ 5:00 p.m.
Location:	FRCOG Offices, 12 Olive Street, Greenfield, MA – Room 221/Library
Facilitator:	Bill Perlman, Chair

Representatives Present:

- Jay DiPucchio, Regionally Elected
- Kevin Fox, Council Appointee, Colrain
- Bill Perlman, Regionally Elected
- Jim Basford, FRPB Appointee

Staff Members Present:

- Bob Dean, Director Regional Services
- Kimberly Noake-MacPhee, Land Use & Natural Resources Program Manager
- Rebekah Boyd, Admin Services

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA:

1. Review and adopt 11.9.17 Executive Committee minutes

Bill P. opened the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Jay D. moved adoption of the 11.9.17 minutes. Kevin F. seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Continuation of Public Hearing RE: Petition for Hawley Middle Road Discontinuance

Bill P. opened the public hearing at 5:01 p.m. to consider discontinuance of a section of Hawley’s Middle Road. Bob D. explained that the DCR and town of Hawley have a maintenance agreement, but Hawley still has questions on the effect of the discontinuance on Chapter 90 funding. Because road mileage is a factor in that funding equation, a 3-mile loss could be rather significant. The town seeks help from Rep. Mark to be “held harmless” by the state, and thus, request not to continue the hearing tonight, but in Feb or March instead.

Jay D. moved to continue the hearing on March 8, at 5 p.m. Jim B. seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Jim asked what happens if they need more time. Bill suggested the committee dismiss the motion and have the town start over. He suggested FRCOG might screen petitioning towns to see if they are ready. Bob said he tries to work with the towns to be sure they’ve filed all their options before coming to a petition. He will check into Mark’s office to see about Hawley’s progress.

3 Review and approval of request for FERC relicensing intervenor status

Kimberly Noake MacPhee reported that the FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) has not made a decision regarding FirstLight’s request for a temporary amendment to their current license, in

which they seek to use full-storage capacity of the upper Northfield Mountain reservoir during the winter months. FRCOG and the Connecticut River Conservancy recently filed a joint Motion to Intervene with FERC to preserve our right to participate in this proceeding.

She presented the Executive Committee with a draft copy of a second, separate, Motion to Intervene to be filed with FERC as part of FirstLight's (FL) relicensing process. The current license expires in April 2018. Staff anticipates FL will be filing their final amended license application in next 20 to 60 days. As with the temporary amendment filing, interested parties must file a Motion to Intervene at the appropriate time in the relicensing process to ensure FERC recognizes our participation and comments. Kimberly asked for any comments on the draft document and explained that the draft is straightforward, without any extensive comments about erosion because FRCOG's comments are already on record.

Members and staff discussed FirstLight's possible responses to FRCOG's Motion to Intervene. Kimberly surmised that some sort of pro forma objection might be possible but it is highly unlikely FERC would refuse to grant FRCOG Intervenor status. Our previous comments to FERC are evidence we can use in discussions with MassDEP as part of their 401 Water Quality Certificate permitting process.

Jay D. moved to proceed with drafting the motion to intervene to be filed with FERC in the Northfield Pumped Storage /Turner's Falls hydroelectric projects' application for relicensure. Kevin F. seconded the motion, which passed with all in favor.

4. Process to transfer OPEB to SBTRF

Staff reported that the state approved the use of the SBTRF for FRCOG's OPEB trust. Pat has more paperwork to fill out in order to set up the monetary transfers from FRCOG.

5. Announced FRCOG retirements – plan for rehiring and paying for retiree health insurance

Bob announced the following retirements and staff losses, and the replacement hiring schedule:

- Pat A., Finance Director retires March 30; search underway; interviews to begin soon.
- Jim Cerone, Building Inspector retires June 30; recruitment begun; hoping for a replacement by 4/1. (Mark Bashista was hired to be Jim's replacement, but will, instead, work only one day a week until a full-time inspector begins work.
- Glen Ayers, Health Inspector — June 30; hiring to begin soon; may be difficult finding a replacement with the same breadth of knowledge.

Members discussed the increase in retirement insurance payments. Staff is estimating new costs of approximately \$25,000 per year, to be taken from the OPEB pool, as suggested by Fin Com.

6. Updates and announcements

- **FCECS**

Bill P. outlined the latest in FCECS updates:

- Previously told by EOPS and state police that we were not in phase 1 of new state system buildout.
- Felt system would fail before state could take over, so applied for \$125,000 grant to redesign and re-implement the 450 MHz system.

- EOPS heard that FRCOG had applied for this money (which they wanted) and discouraged us.
- Conference call with Kurt Wood and Mike Salzman in which they indicated that we would be moved up in priority — to keep us running and move us onto the 800 system (as urged by the Governor).
- Governor authorized funding promised for bringing the FCECS on board the state system.

Emerging questions of the FCECS Oversight Committee, and Executive Committee members include: What is the project plan? Who is running it? Who is the point of contact? What is the timeline now that FRCOG has been bumped up in priority? Should we be concerned because nothing is in writing? How to handle areas where 800 MHz can't be used? Will we need to overlap use of the two systems, and if so, for how long? How many channels will be available to us? What kind of input and control will we have? Will the state pay for the transfer in its entirety? What sort of additional analysis needs to be done with radios in towns?

Bill P. reported that Kurt Wood indicated there may have to be some cost-sharing on the part of towns together with the state. The total cost to move us to 800 MHz requires less engineering, but many more radio replacements than if staying at 450MHz. Bill reported that staff is seeking available mechanisms to bond on behalf of the towns, if all agree.

Bill P. said the oversight committee is working on a set of questions and requests for assurances for when, in the next few weeks, formal communications begin. Jay suggested writing to the Governor to thank him and outline our understanding of what's happening, and to cc Kurt Wood, so that all are on the same page. Members discussed possible faultiness of tests already run in towns; the need to know what the towns want and to be sure they're on board; timely communications with Kurt Wood, legislators, and all stakeholders; the opportunity Franklin County presents the state as a pilot program because of our system's fragility; and concerns about funding. Consensus was that the FRCOG and FCECS board would need soon to hold a summit meeting with towns to inform them of the situation, to make a decision, and if all are in agreement, to issue the bond.

7. Business Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance

Bob passed out memos sent to Franklin County Select Boards regarding a proposed Shared Human Resources Project and the Regional Electricity Aggregation Project. (See handouts). Bob has been meeting with some of the towns over the last few months to measure and generate interest.

Jay made a motion to adjourn. Kevin seconded. All in favor.

Documents Distributed:

- Agenda
- 11.9.17 Executive Committee minutes
- *Motion to intervene of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments In the (Above) Application for Relicensing of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project (N) 2485) and Turner's Falls Hydroelectric Project (No 1889)*
- *Regional Electricity Aggregation Project* memo from Bob Dean dated December 11, 2017.
- *New Shared Human Resources Project* memo from Bob Dean dated November 21, 2017.