



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Executive Committee — *MINUTES*

Date & Time:	Thursday, October 11, 2018/ 5:00 p.m.
Location:	FRCOG Offices, 12 Olive Street, Greenfield, MA – Room 218
Facilitator:	Jay DiPucchio, Chair

Representatives Present:

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

Staff Members Present:

- Linda Dunlavy, Executive Director
- Rebekah Boyd, Admin Services Coordinator

1. Review and adopt 8.9.18 Executive Committee minutes

Jay D. opened the meeting at 4:58 p.m. **Bill P. moved adoption of the 8.9.18 minutes. Kevin F. seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

2. First legal review of FRTA-FRCOG lease.

Linda explained that Atty. Brian Shea, sole practitioner, reviewed our lease with FRTA, and found that it encompasses everything a good lease should although some statements are vague and could use more definition. He felt it was clear that FRCOG must cover capital costs. He felt FRCOG should once again request a long-term capital plan and budget from the FRTA. Linda said capital expenses were covered by MassDOT and Mass Transit earmarks previously, but these funds are nearly depleted.

The committee discussed the capital cost percentages laid out in the lease and relative use of the building’s spaces, as well as the idea of holding a joint meeting. They considered several possible options for moving forward, including:

- Leaving the lease as is
- A cooperative relationship of sorts, allowing FRCOG to have ownership of our space
- Paying a market-rate rent, which would increase short term expenses but limit long term costs. This will only work if the FRTA can hold a capital reserve account, which Tina from the FRTA says they cannot.
- Hiring a property management company that cares for the building for both parties and also holds a reserve account

Consensus was that FRCOG needs an annual budget, long-term capital plan and history of annual capital expenses made to date from the FRTA as well as a better understanding of what the FRTA is and is not allowed to do. Linda agreed to call her contacts at the FTA to understand FRTA rules and then to send a memo to request a FRTA budget by December in order to plan our own long-term budget and

to negotiate any possible changes, if deemed appropriate. Atty. Shea is available to help FRCOG further, if needed.

3. Discussion of FY20 priorities.

Linda reported that the projected FY20 prioritized expenses so far include the overhaul of the FRCOG website and social media platforms. The hope is to hire someone in the next few months to survey staff and constituents about how they want the website and platforms to be used, create a plan based on response, and work with staff to update the site. Also on deck is a strategic and succession planning project. Staff members are looking into hiring a consultant to assist with this effort — necessary given the upcoming spate of retirements. One \$58,000 quote included talking to all 29 council members, which everyone agreed is unnecessary.

Jim B. suggested consultants could survey Council members to see how they think we're doing. Jay D. felt it was a better idea than having a consultant have a discussion with each member, because a survey would capture the responses of people who are really interested and engaged.

Linda put the committee on notice that the phone system died several weeks ago and was replaced with a software-based solution. Many issues continue, she said, but if staff can solve these problems, the software system will have proven to be a remarkably cheap solution.

4. Franklin Regional Emergency Communication System (FCECS) update, including authorization to spend insurance proceeds

Linda informed members that the Poets Seat radio tower was struck by lightning, resulting in extensive (estimated \$200,000) damage because the equipment was not grounded. The loss of equipment has had some impact on Turners Falls service, Bill reported. Though staff member Dan Nietzsche has said we have not gotten a single complaint call from Montague, Linda asserted. Bill offered that it's unclear if the lightning strike exacerbated already occurring "missing link" issues.

Last month we received a \$42,000 check from the insurance company for the insured portion of damaged equipment. According to the municipal modernization bill, by June 30 a FRCOG official must direct the money to be allocated for repairs or it goes into an undesignated fund balance. Staff is not yet requesting this authorization.

At the time of the lightning strike, Green Mountain was the radio system manager for the FCECS under an extended (3-month, beginning July 1) contract, but the company did not respond to FRCOG's Invitation for Bids (IFB) for system management going forward. They told staff that they did not submit a management bid because the FCECS was too far away from their New Hampshire base and because our system was taking too much time away from other projects. Linda suspects it may also be because the system failing, and perhaps, a losing proposition.

Update on Moving FCECS to 800 MHz System

The Commonwealth Radio System (CRS) engineering RFR (Request for Responses) has been posted, Linda reported. Linda attended a meeting wherein she explained FRCOG's political and ECS problems with Matt Moran, the new leader of CRS, who likewise explained to her his political issues. Linda said the good news is that we have a relationship with the new leader. The unsettling news is that our ECS

continues to be in place of limbo, and while they promise the county our system will be included in the 800 system, weeks and months go by without word. Kevin F. reminded members that FRCOG pledged not to apply for a grant if they helped us. Linda affirmed that FRCOG did not try to get the grant because the state assured us our problem was taken care of by the move to the 800 system.

Linda asked if members thought it made sense to use FRCOG money to hire a person or firm to be our radio system manager — to do what Green Mountain is currently contracted to do, and to be at the table with EOPSS, reviewing the work of the engineering study. Jay indicated that it would be a good idea to have someone with technical expertise and political acumen to build relationships at the local and state levels, especially because our original contacts have moved along. Bill listed several of the complicated technical tasks someone in the position would need to tackle.

Considering previous contracts, and projecting figures relative to the need for the candidate to have 2 areas of expertise — plus benefits — the group estimated the cost to be between \$60-80 thousand a year, and up to \$100,000 if benefits are included. Linda reminded members approval from the full Council is needed to appropriate the funding and suggested use of a motion for “up-to” the amount being requested. Members asked Linda to schedule an emergency Finance Committee meeting and Jay to email a memo to Council members regarding the situation, and the need for funding.

Staff will draft the job description after staff carry out the research needed to ascertain the required skillset; decide whether the position should be full- or part-time, contracted or hired; and so on. Bill P. offered that the position will be needed for 2-years, minimum, during the transition to the 800MHz system.

5. November 13 party for Steve Kulik

A celebration of 30 years of state Representative Steve Kulik’s work with and for the citizens of the First Franklin District will take place November 13 at the Greenfield Community College dining Commons. Members are invited and invitations are forthcoming.

6. Business Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance

Bill P. made a motion to adjourn. Jim seconded. Meeting adjourned at 5:46 p.m.

Documents Distributed:

- Agenda
- 8.9.18 draft Executive Committee minutes