



# Franklin Regional Council of Governments

## Executive Committee—*MINUTES*

Date & Time:	Thursday, January 10, 2018/ 5:00 p.m.
Location:	FRCOG Offices, 12 Olive Street, Greenfield, MA – Second Floor, Room 221
Facilitator:	Jay DiPucchio, Chair

**Representatives Present:**

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

**Staff Members Present:**

- Linda Dunlavy, Executive Director
- Claire McGinnis, Finance Director
- Rebekah Boyd, Admin Services Coordinator

**1. Review and adopt 12.13.18 Executive Committee/Greater Franklin County Economic Development Board minutes**

Jay D. opened the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

**Bill P. moved to adopt the 12.13.18 minutes. Kevin seconded; the motion passed unanimously.**

**2. Consider Sharon Cottrell for a 5-year seat on the Franklin Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (FRHRA) Board of Commissioners**

The committee read the letter from FRHRA Executive Director Francis Pheeny recommending Ms. Cottrell’s reappointment to the Board.

**Bill P. moved to reappoint Ms. Cottrell. Kevin seconded; the motion passed unanimously.**

The FRHRA, a vestige of the county’s past, was created in 1974 by statute, explained Linda. The housing authority is governed by 11 to 12 commissioners, 7 of whom are appointed by FRCOG; the others, gubernatorially. The board currently is short 4 members. Since Linda has worked at FRCOG, the FRHRA brought candidates to the Executive Committee asking them to appoint the HRA’s choice. Now the interim director seeks our help. Linda asked the committee for appointment ideas. She’ll bring the question to the full Council in two weeks.

**3. Review 2020 budget priorities**

Claire explained that staff reviewed at length the draft budget before the committee. Programmatic changes and budgetary priorities discussed at Finance Committee (Fin Com) meetings and included in this budget are as follows:

- Funding for web and social media platforms
- Funding for succession planning of key staff
- Financial support for administration and management services from each of the municipal programs' general funds; up from 10% to 11%, an amount all programs can afford
- A 2.5% Competitive Market Increase (CMI); A figure recommended by the Personnel Committee, and based on the information that insurance will go up 5%
- Funding OPEB at \$205,000
- The \$43,973 salary for the new FCECS radio system manager
- A level-serviced Town Accounting program. This is not a final budget for them; they're having trouble filling a vacancy, looking with state to figure out how to fund robust training.
- No fee increase for Cooperative Inspections — can maintain services without
- No fee increase for Collective Purchasing — that budget's in great shape
- A greater Cooperative Public Health budget with Shelburne now a full member of the service
- No significant changes to our lease in 2020, but have not yet received a long-term capital improvement plan from the FRTA as yet.

### **OPEB**

There is no formal OPEB schedule as yet, but because OPEB is a moving target, and the likelihood of our ever reaching whole funding is very slim, Fin Com members agreed that setting an 80% OPEB liability target goal in 4-7 years was reasonable and possible, if funded every year. Linda reminded the group that the indirect revenue impacts OPEB; municipal assessments are not affected.

### **FCECS**

This budget lowers the amount Council intended to have set aside annually for capital improvement. This is because the cost of in-house 15-hour/week Radio System Manager is higher than previous contracted services and the FCECS Oversight Committee asked for a unit assessment increase of no more than 2.5%. The only budgetary way to do this was to cut the capital reserve line.

Bill P. objected to a decrease in the capital budget. Linda agreed and has already asked the Fin Com to consider three possible options to bring it back to the \$75,000 plan: 1.) Keep this budget as is, or 2.) Use FRCOG undesignated free cash to get us to \$75,000, or 3.) Some combo of the two. Several members of the committee agreed that the FCECS is in crisis and that the current budget is not smart. Kevin expressed his distaste for shoehorning a budget into the arbitrary 2.5%. Claire suggested the 2.5% figure may have been a request, not a demand. Jay D. assured the committee that the fin com understands the stunning level of risk of operating a failing system and will be looking at the budget based on what needs to happen.

Bill M. allowed that he voted against what he thought was a one-time injection of \$75,000. Bill P. clarified that the Council funding 2 years ago of was never to be a one-time fund, but rather, an annual \$75,000 increase — not for operations, but for capital replacement and improvement — which is vital, given the system's state of disrepair. Linda added that if the FCECS transfers to the state 800 MHz system, and the money has not been used for repair or capital changes necessary for transfer, the money will be returned to the towns in the same ratio it was put in.

The committee discussed the process by which emergency services entities are assessed. Members remarked that providers understand the system, but most municipal executive boards and even some Council members find it somewhat baffling. Bill M. asked about the initial agreement between towns and FRCOG. Linda said that each of the 26 municipalities signed a document asking the FRCOG to own and maintain the system and that an oversight committee be created to be responsible for fair and equitable assessment of the costs. On January 31 the FRCOG and FCECS Oversight Board is holding an information and decision-making session at GCC. All are encouraged to attend.

#### **Statutory and Regional Services Assessments**

Claire referred to the draft town assessment numbers, to be supplied to Council, along with a second page comparing 2016 to 2018 EQVs, ranked by dollar value of change. EQV changes result in change to assessments. This budget results in a +3% increase to the Regional Services Assessment when considered alone, but as statutory assessment drops, the increase when considered in sum is 2.3%.

#### **4. Discuss flat fee billing business model**

Linda explained that staff have been searching for ways to sustain Partnership For Youth (PFY) which has recently struggled to stay funded. One challenge is that the federal government places lifetime caps on some grant programs; once a grant has been awarded, PFY can't return for more funding.

The good news is that a leader in PFY's primary project, the Communities That Care Coalition (CTC), is now recognized as a national expert in the social impacts model, which makes her in high demand as a consultant. She has been asked to travel to coalitions across the country to outline strategies that have worked for FRCOG, and suggest other tactics. Because of this, Linda and Claire have been curious about whether FRCOG can use flat fee billing to potentially bring in revenue for that program. The auditors have given the okay, even to make a profit from some projects, if the revenue is designed for a specific purpose and held in general fund. Noting that it's a significant business model change, Linda asked how the Committee felt about using a flat fee.

The group discussed how temporary absences of one staff member would impact the FRCOG and Franklin County, how such a system would compete with private market, and whether or not a government body has the right to compete. Kevin pointed to the services of the jail and tech school as precedent for that sort of competition, both of which generate some bad feelings from community. Members allowed that many in the county feel the positives outweigh the negatives in those cases. Staff see it as a way to keep PFY funded and solvent, so it can continue to provide services to FC towns. Kevin offered that if it became more than a one-time thing, want to consider a fee-for-service mechanism. Consensus of the members is to proceed with investigation into this flat fee service.

#### **5. Review legislative and FY20 MA budget priorities**

Linda reported that it's the start of new legislative session, and the deadline for filing budget priorities is next Friday. FRCOG's list of pressing matters includes:

- A study of innovative ways to more robustly provide transit, possibly using smaller vehicles
- Boston to Greenfield rail
- Chapter 90 funding changes which include a pilot component for towns that have land permanently protected, but are still required to maintain roads
- Budget funding for regional schools

- Increase in funding for economic resilience.

#### **6. Business not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance**

FirstLight Power is attempting to transfer ownership of the Turners Falls and Northfield Mountain power generating projects to two new LLCs, in order to, we believe, limit their liability for the enhancement, protection, and mitigation of the Connecticut River that FERC and MassDEP would likely require under the new the 30-50 year licenses. FERC is allowing only a 30-day comment period, which falls during the government shutdown when the federal agency staff we'd work with are furloughed.

Staff would like Executive Committee to approve a FRCOG letter to FERC asking for a 90-day comment period and to request intervenor status. Kimberly is currently drafting a similar letter for Gill.

**Bill M. motioned to approve sending a letter to FERC requesting intervenor status and a 90-day comment period. Kevin seconded. The motion passed with all in favor.**

**Bill P. made a motion to adjourn. Kevin seconded. Meeting adjourned at 5:59 p.m.**

#### **Documents Distributed:**

- Agenda
- 12.13.18 Draft Executive Committee/Greater Franklin County Economic Development Board minutes
- Letter from Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority, dated 12.18.18.
- FY20 Draft Budget
- Regional and Statutory Assessments from FY20 Draft Budget
- Change in EQV for Franklin County Towns, 2016 to 2018
- Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) event flyer