



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

COUNCIL — *MINUTES*

Date & Time:	Thursday, July 18, 2019 / 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.
Location:	William B. Allen Room, Olver Transit Center, 12 Olive Street, Greenfield
Facilitator:	John O’ Rourke, Vice Chair

REPRESENTATIVE ATTENDEES:

Kayce Warren, Ashfield; **Stanley Garland**, Bernardston; **Kevin Fox**, Colrain; **John O’Rourke**, Conway; **William Bembury**, Erving; **Greg Snedeker**, Gill; **Hussain Hamdan**, Hawley; **Brian DeVriese**, Heath; **Wayne Hachey**, New Salem; **Jennifer Morse**, Rowe; **Ellen McKay**, Shutesbury; **Lynn Sibley**, Whately; **Jay DiPucchio**, Regionally Elected; **Bill Perlman**, Regionally Elected; **Jim Basford**, FRPB.

REGRETS: **Patricia Duffy**, Leverett; **Michele Giarusso**, Leyden; **Steve Ellis**, Montague; **Tom Fydenkevez**, Sunderland; **Michael Idoine**, Wendell

ABSENT: **Zachary Turner**, Buckland; **Sarah Reynolds**, Charlemont; **Vacant**, Deerfield; **William Martin**, Greenfield; **Alice Houghtaling**, Monroe; **Alexander Meisner**, Northfield; **Jane Peirce**, Orange; **Bob Manners**, Shelburne; **Larry “Doc” Pruyne**, Warwick.

STAFF & VISITORS: **Linda Dunlavy**, Executive Director; **Claire McGinnis**, Finance Director; **Rebekah Boyd**, Administrative Services Coordinator

1. Roll Call	Vice Chair John O’ Rourke
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The chair convened the meeting at 5:30 p.m. Roll call was taken and a general quorum was met with 15 members and 34.675 % of the weighted vote of the total membership in attendance. A financial quorum was not in attendance.

2. Reorganization	John O’ Rourke
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Since the FRCOG has a tradition of maintaining a slate of officers for 2 years, Jay and Linda proposed that the FY20 slate remain the same as FY19. That is:

- Council Chair* – Michelle Giarusso, Leyden
- Council Vice Chair* – John O’Rourke, Conway
- Secretary* – Kevin Fox, Colrain
- Council Appointment to Executive Committee* – Kevin Fox, Colrain
- Council Appointment to Executive Committee* – Mayor Bill Martin, Greenfield (through the end of the Mayor’s term; the Council will need to reappoint a new member to the Executive Committee at its January meeting.)

No nominations were made from the floor.

Ellen M. moved to elect the FY19 slate of officers for FY20. Kayce W. seconded the motion, which passed with all in favor.

3. Adopt 1/24/19 minutes

John O' Rourke

Bill P. moved to adopt the minutes of the January 24, 2019 meeting. Kayce W. seconded the motion, which passed with all in favor.

4. Council Update

John O' Rourke

The proposed FY20 meeting schedule is as follows: October 17, 2019; January 23, 2020; April 16, 2020. The FRCOG holds all Council meetings in the Transit Center.

John reported that, sadly, Beth Adams, FRCOG representative from Leverett, passed away this spring after a courageous battle with cancer. Beth was a lifelong activist for peace, social justice, and the environment. Although she was not on the Council for much more than a year, she offered outside-of-the-box thinking to our group, and will be missed.

Our committees are full, with the exception of the Personnel Committee, which currently has three vacancies. That committee occasionally works with staff to review the Personnel Policy handbook and the Supervisor's Manual, as needed; act as a Grievance Appeal Board for the FRCOG; and review employee reclassification requests from program managers. The Board also makes recommendations to the Finance Committee regarding competitive market/cost of living increases during the budget season. The Council Chair appoints members of the personnel committee, so if you have an interest in getting involved in that way, please contact the chair, or FRCOG director, Linda Dunlavy.

5. Executive Committee Update

Jay DiPucchio, Committee Chair

In its meetings since January, the FRCOG Executive Committee:

- Learned about the state's new short-term rental (Air B&B) law, focusing particularly on the ways in which towns/cities can benefit financially from the new law through taxation, and licensing and penalty fees; can choose to limit growth by creating a cap on numbers; and can make adjustments to zoning to meet each individual municipality's needs and visions.
- Considered and subsequently appointed two candidates to 5-year terms on the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority Board of Commissioners.
- Learned of and discussed the progress of the emergency communication system migration to the state system. (See *Updates* for details) Jay noted Linda was hardworking on this cause.
- Voted to draft a letter to FERC asking for intervener status and for further mitigation measures for the Bear Swamp Hydroelectric Project's Final License Application.
- Learned of the Hampshire Council of Government's (HCG) imminent closing and considered the programs that FRCOG might reasonably adopt in order to improve services to Franklin County towns while also assisting Hampshire County municipalities. After hearing of favorable financial, risk, and benefits analyses, the committee was cautiously comfortable with the decision to take over portions of the HCG procurement programs, for at least a year, while staff determined if the program is financially viable, sustainable over the long term, and the benefit to Franklin County communities they believe it will be.
- Convened as the Economic Development District Governing Board to discuss and accept the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) annual report, the last of the reports in the

5-year cycle. The EDD board also voted to approve changes to its structure and procedural rules, and appointed nominated members to the CEDS committee. Much streamlining to its process.

6. Executive Director Update

Linda Dunlavy

Linda highlighted FRCOG's recent work (see *Council Updates* for details), including:

Advocacy staff are representatives on many boards, committees, and commissions: *Jessica Atwood* was appointed to the MassDevelopment New Market Advisory Tax Credits Advisory Board, which provides input on the allocation of New Market Tax Credits for projects that benefit low-income communities. *Kimberly Noake MacPhee* is a member of the Franklin Conservation District (FCD) Board of Supervisors, which supports the local work of the Natural Resources Conservation Service. *Phoebe Walker* sits on the Special Commission on Local and Regional Public Health, which works with the legislature to change how local public health is provided in the Commonwealth.

The state Cannabis Control Commission has drafted proposed changes to the marijuana (CDB & Hemp) regulations, including allowing Marijuana Cafes and Retail Delivery Services of marijuana products to consumers. FRCOG staff will draft a response.

Natural Resources FRCOG published *A Framework for Resilience* the first climate change plan in Massachusetts that focuses on a watershed as a whole unit rather than breaking it down by town. The publication considers 14 Deerfield River watershed towns collectively, a state model for resiliency.

Complete Count Committee. The census is online this year. Staff has distributed a survey, and is working to deal with the ramifications of that. Staff urges town officials to get involved. Billions of federal dollars are distributed to regions based on population, making a complete count vital.

Brownfield's Grant. FRCOG is the recipient of a new \$200,000 Brownfield's Grant. Towns are encouraged to let staff know if you may have a contaminated site.

Collective Purchasing Expansion. FRCOG hired the dismantled Hampshire Council of Governments' (HCG) Chief Procurement Officer. The highway services, fuel, and other bids for the 24 Hampshire County towns, combined with those of Franklin County's 26, will increase our buying power.

Regional Animal Control Officer. FRCOG assisted seven towns and the county sheriff's office with creation of a regional animal control officer, soon to launch.

Franklin County Emergency Communication System. The transfer to the state system is on track. An equipment inventory of Franklin County needs was created, submitted to the state, and agreed upon. Phases of the migration were discussed. Coverage with the new system will be better than we currently have. (See *Council Updates* handout, page 6, for details.)

7. Planning Board Update

James Basford, FRPB appointee

Jim reported that the board reviewed and provided input on the CEDS report and regional transportation plan, and participated in a listening session sponsored by the Nature Conservancy about climate-change solutions for transportation expansion.

8. Personnel Committee

Bill Perlman, Committee Chair

- *First Reading: Out-Of-State Travel Policy**

Bill reported that hearing news of the closing of the HCG, and FRCOG's subsequent proposal to adopt some of the agency's programming, the personnel committee approved two employment positions for the procurement programs. Only one of these positions was realized. The committee's criteria: 1.) that

the FRCOG provide a function not covered by other organizations, and 2.) that the FRCOG hire someone who is familiar with the HCG way of doing things and has relationships with Hampshire County towns. The committee felt relatively confident that adopting parts of the HCG procurement program would be, in the end, a benefit to FRCOG.

The materials for the first reading of the Out-Of-State Travel Policy were not ready at meeting time.

9. Finance Committee Update

Lynn Sibley, Committee Chair

Lynn presented that FY19 was another stable year for the FRCOG, preliminary results suggesting revenues will exceed expenses by a healthy margin. The expansion of the Cooperative Public Health Service (CPHS) from 11 participating Towns to 13 resulted in the need for one significant appropriation increase at year's end. New members paid partial year assessments, balancing the additional costs. The committee will ask once again to carry forward into FY20 the unspent capital amounts for the FCECS program, building a capital reserve fund for the equipment and tower system against future damage or replacement costs. On Tuesday, the committee took very small budget amendments for FY2019 (one line to another). It intended to bring forward adjustments for FY20, but no financial quorum is present. Lynn thanked Claire, who, she said, has done a marvelous tweaking job.

10. Special Presentations

Linda Dunlavy, Executive Director

- *MA Rural Policy Plan draft for review*

Linda presented the draft Rural Policy Plan to the Council (see Power Point slides), outlining the Rural Policy Advisory Committee's (RPAC) work to date. The goal of creating the Massachusetts Rural Policy Plan is to identify, highlight, and offer policy recommendations related to the unique issues and challenges faced by rural Massachusetts. The Plan provides a socioeconomic summary of rural Massachusetts and addresses 15 focus areas identified through listening sessions held in late 2018. The Plan provides a thorough, but succinct, outline of each focus area that identifies the issue and highlights sub-regional differences; describes current related state policies and a set of best practices, from MA or elsewhere; and provides prioritized recommendations. Members of the RPAC and rural Regional Planning Agencies statewide shared in the effort to engage and solicit input from a large swath of stakeholders throughout Massachusetts — including FRCOG Council members and citizens of Franklin County — through meetings and other efforts, and are sharing in the writing of the Plan.

Following the slideshow, members commented on several continuing municipal challenges. Linda D. remarked that with each new governor, the state crafts a new economic plan. Going forward, she said, the Commonwealth will consider rural economic development in earnest, and for the first time, shine the light on how hard it is to live in rural Massachusetts. She asked that Council members read the chapters accessed on our website and get back to staff with any comments.

11. Business Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance

Bill P. motioned for adjournment. Kayce W. seconded. The meeting adjourned at 6:41 p.m. with all in favor.

Documents Distributed:

- Agenda
- Draft minutes of the January 24, 2019 meeting
- July 2019 FRCOG Programmatic Updates
- Revenues and Expenses Report