



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Executive Committee & Greater Franklin County
Economic Development District Board — *MINUTES*

Date & Time:	Thursday, May 9, 2019/ 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 Perlman, Regionally Elected
- Kevin Fox, Council Appointee

Staff Members Present:

- Linda Dunlavy, Executive Director
- Jessica Atwood, Economic Development Program Manager
- Rebekah Boyd, Admin Services Coordinator

1. Review and adopt 3.14.19 Executive Committee minutes

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

Bill P. moved to adopt the 3.14.19 minutes. Jim B. seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

2. Convene as Economic Development District Board for updates

Jessica Atwood announced that the 2019 draft CEDS report has been released and is in its 30-day public comment period. This is a draft of the last of the annual reports for the 5-year cycle. The next cycle begins in FY20. Going forward, CEDS will be in discussions with Greenfield Community College and MassHire about their forthcoming strategic plans in an effort to all be on the same page.

The 2019 CEDS report, which includes recommendations and an update of the status of projects, was posted online and sent to Franklin County towns, with notice about how to contact the CEDS committee with comments. Highlights of the 2019 report include:

- A low unemployment rate, with a jump in the number of people in the labor force across the state, nation, and in Franklin County. The nation experienced an increase of 1% of people in the labor force, but Mass and FC increased by 3%.
- No updated industry sector data. With a reduced budget, the US census bureau hasn't been able to produce the data
- Certification of opportunity
- Explorations into micro transit
- Updates on the Last Mile Broadband and other projects

Bill P. asked how one could go about requesting establishment of a new program. Jess explained that when they create the 2020 plan, the CEDS committee will hold a series of forums and contact member towns and regional economic development organizations to determine area priorities. Executive

Committee members also can talk to Jessica, of course. Primary project solicitors should expect a 5-year project roll-out.

Jessica told members that the onus is on the project proposer to determine who will be the lead on the project. If someone has an idea, they also must have an idea of who will be the right partner. Bill's idea is to pair immigrant farmers with unused farmland. Linda acknowledged that planners had been discussing that sort of matchmaking to increase both diversity and population. The key is deciding who would be right to make up that team, Jess reiterated.

In mid-June, the revised final draft will be reviewed by the regional planning board, approved by CEDS committee, and presented to the Executive Committee for approval. At the next meeting the Executive Committee will solicit people to be on the CEDS committee, which will decrease from 50+ seats to 19. The goal is to have slate of names to review at the June meeting.

As the EDD governing board, the Executive Committee has authority over district, but EDA guidelines would like to dictate who has governing authority on the committee, and will look to enforce those rules tightly. They say the board must "broadly represent the principal economic interests of the region." Of the 5-member Executive Committee, the two regionally elected board members meet that criteria. Members and staff discussed strategies for more closely meeting the EDA's guidelines.

3. HCG Services

The Hampshire County of Governments (HCG) announced that they are basically bankrupt and will be closing after June 30, when it runs out of money. Linda has been talking to stakeholders about which services should be kept, which are valuable to Hampshire County (HC), if any are good for FRCOG to takeover, and if doing so would be beneficial for Franklin County (FC).

Tobacco Control

HCG holds the Tobacco Control grant with services provided to both HC and FC. FRCOG held it years ago, and staff feel it's important that the grant continue to serve both counties. FRCOG has the capacity to take the grant on and staff believe it's a nice fit with Partnership For Youth, the Communities That Care Coalition, and our public health work. The Collaborative for Educational Services (CES) also provides services for teens and is interested in this grant, too. Linda met this week for open conversation with HCG and CES and determined both FRCOG and CES are willing to continue serving both FC and HC. Both are qualified and pay into the state retirement system, but it's unclear who will make the decision about adoption of the program. Staff have talked about wanting to be clear with the Department of Public Health (DPH) that FRCOG will not assume HCG's past performance issues. DPH may break the contract, and ask for RFPs. Staff have alerted them that we are equipped and happy to fulfill the contract.

Collective Purchasing

HCG's similarities to the FRCOG Collective Purchasing Program: Both agencies coordinate and facilitate the bidding process for highway products and services, and we share dog tags and licenses with them. *Differences:* We require an upfront participation fee (assessment) based on population. They use a vendor surcharge (1 ½ to 2%) to fund their program, though the inspector general doesn't like the

process, and MassDOT says it's a disallowed use. With the vender surcharge system, it is challenging to track down vendor payment.

Our chief procurement officer, Andrea Woods, reports that FRCOG's program is stable and our offerings are strong. We don't need to take over HCG's roads bids, but could, and doing so might well result in better pricing for FC. One option would be an agreement that FRCOG takes highway products and services, and CES takes school supplies and another agency the accounting and IT programs. Currently HCG is moving ahead with highway products and services bids and getting them in place. Our understanding is that if FRCOG takes them over before July 1, we'd be bound by to honor their contracts for 2019 — which is a risk — but in 2020, towns would have to adopt our system.

Linda said that HCG's Director Todd Ford wants the purchasing department to go entirely to one entity, along with its 1.75 employees. The program has run a \$32,000 to \$38,000 deficit in recent years, was not audited in 2018, and has no finance department. FRCOG won't take something that isn't financially solvent or a benefit to FC. Ford told FRCOG staff that he's taking proposals. The committee found this perplexing, feeling that such a decision is that of member HC towns, not the HCG.

Members asked how quickly FRCOG could conceivably have HC towns join our programs. Linda informed them that the FC highway bids are completed and that none of the HC towns have budgeted for our collective purchasing assessment. HCG's purchasing program staggers bids, and not all are going out before June 30. Ford has instructed HCG staff to tell towns they are moving ahead with bidding, and that contracts will be taken over by successor.

Members discussed the extra administrative work needed to get HCG on board; the possible use of freed-up DLTA funds to pay for that administration; theories as to why the HCG's purchasing program was in the red — Overstaffing? Overestimation of revenue? Difficulty tracking down vendor payments? — and in contrast, how FRCOG's fixed model allows us to plan; the measure of risk given that we wouldn't be taking on the whole suite of services; what HC towns will do without a bidding program; the imperative of not accepting a deficit with the programs; the possible financial benefit to our towns; and the lack of engagement of the Department of Revenue; the focused involvement of legislators; and the need to serve enough HC towns for the takeover to be financially beneficial to FC.

Jay felt that if staff can work out a 3-way split, do outreach, move quickly, and HC towns are interested in working with FRCOG, we should pursue the idea. Jim thought waiting until next year might be best. The committee will learn more next month.

4. FCECS Update

Franklin County is now included in the state's engineering study. The FCECS Oversight Board recently received an inventory of needed equipment from towns and sent an edited list to the state. The state feels the list is reasonable. The oversight committee asked for draft rollout plan from the state after having submitted several suggested plans. (*See plan.*)

Greenfield wants to be in first group to test the new system; however, the committee still doesn't know the order in which the state will do conversions — east to west or west to east. The state will spread out the rollout, with money coming to the system each year. For a period of time while the

state is taking down and moving or adding towers, we will have areas where operators won't be able to talk on the state system.

Linda spoke with Matt Moran who would like to postpone the May 31 legislative briefing, and instead meet the first week in June to have a solid plan for migration to announce to Senator Comerford, and Representative McGovern.

5. Business not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance

Bill P made a motion to adjourn. Kevin seconded. Meeting adjourned at 6:17 p.m.

Documents Distributed:

- Agenda
- 3.14.19 Draft Executive Committee Minutes
- Email correspondence between FRCOG and Matt Moran and the state Office of Technology Services and Security regarding a draft migration FCECS migration plan
- Email sent to Franklin County Legislators Select Boards, and First Responders: Status Updates Regarding the Possible Migration of the Franklin County First Responders to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Interoperable Radio System (CoMIRS)
- Establishing the State Action for Public Health Excellence (SAPHE) Program Flyer
- State House News Service press release re: Report of Special Commission on Local and Regional Health