



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

COUNCIL — *MINUTES*

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| Date & Time: | Thursday, October 18, 2018 / 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. |
| Location: | William B. Allen Room, Olver Transit Center, 12 Olive Street, Greenfield |
| Facilitator: | John O’ Rourke, Outgoing Chair; Michelle Giarusso, Incoming Chair |

REPRESENTATIVE ATTENDEES:

Kayce Warren, Ashfield; **Zachary Turner**, Buckland; **Marguerite Willis**, Charlemont; **Kevin Fox**, Colrain; **Kip Komosa**, Deerfield; **William Bembury**, Erving; **Greg Snedeker**, Gill; **Brian DeVriese**, Heath; **Michele Giarusso**, Leyden; **Alice Houghtaling**, Monroe; **Steve Ellis**, Montague; **Wayne Hachey**, New Salem; **Julia Blyth**, Northfield; **Jennifer Morse**, Rowe; **Ellen McKay**, Shutesbury; **Tom Fydenkevez**, Sunderland; **Dan Keller**, Wendell; **Lynn Sibley**, Whately; **Bill Perlman**, Regionally Elected; **Jim Basford**, FRPB.

REGRETS: **Stanley Garland**, Bernardston; **John O’Rourke**, Conway; **William Martin**, Greenfield; **Beth Adams**, Leverett; **Bob Manners**, Shelburne; **Jay DiPucchio**, Regionally Elected.

ABSENT: **Hussain Hamdan**, Hawley; **Jane Pierce**, Orange; **Larry Pruyne**, Warwick

STAFF & VISITORS: **Linda Dunlavy**, Executive Director; **Claire McGinnis**, Finance Director; **Rebekah Boyd**, Admin Services Coordinator; **Phoebe Walker**, Director of Regional Services; **Bob Dean**, Director of Regional Services; **Kimberly Noake MacPhee**, Land Use & Natural Resources Program Manager

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| 1. Roll Call | Chair Michele Giarusso |
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The chair convened the meeting at 5:30 p.m. Roll call was taken and a general and financial quorum was met with 19 members and 62.862% of the weighted vote of the total membership in attendance. Following roll call the Monroe member increased the count to 20 and 63.139% of the weighted vote.

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| 2. Adopt 7/18/18 minutes | Michele Giarusso |
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Ellen M. moved to adopt the minutes of the July 18, 2018 meeting. Kayce W. seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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| 3. Council Update | Michele Giarusso |
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Chair Michele Giarusso welcomed Kip Komosa and Alice Houghtaling, new representatives from Deerfield and Monroe, respectively. All representatives and town officials are invited to a celebration for Steve Kulik upon the occasion of his retirement from 25 years as the state representative of the First Franklin District. The party will be on Tuesday, November 13th from 5:30 to 8:00 at the GCC Dining Commons. The event will be free and will include food, drink and entertainment.

The next Council meetings will be held January 24, 2019 and April 17, 2019 at the Transit Center.

Discussion and Potential Allocation of Funding for a Radio System Manager

Linda explained that the towns own the 15-year-old, nearly obsolete, and frequently malfunctioning Franklin County Emergency Communication System (FCECS). Six weeks ago FRCOG staff issued a request for response for a radio manager, but have received no proposals. The existing management company also did not respond, stating that the system's needs were greater than expected and the towers too far from their NH home base.

Meanwhile, staff has been advocating hard to migrate to the Commonwealth 800 MHz system and not seeing much movement on the part of the state. They recommended, and the Executive Committee agreed, to commence the search for a system manager with radio system expertise, an ability to understand and liaise with EEOPS, and public education and outreach skills. Staff hope to find the right person. He/she would be a hired as a highly-paid (as necessary), unbenefited 2- to 3-year employee.

Tom F. suggested contacting the FC ham association for tips or to locate possible candidates. Bill P. explained that the system is simulcast which makes it a little unusual. Though most of the equipment is out of manufacture, someone with experience with simulcast systems would be preferred.

Marguerite W. asked if anyone at the various state agencies is interested in or aware of our FCECS problems and needs. Linda answered affirmatively and updated members on the process of moving to the 800 MHz system. Marguerite W. asked if existing radios will continue to be in operation. Linda said yes, adding that the system is not in great shape, however. Staff hope a dedicated person will help keep it maintained.

Lynn S. said the Finance Committee supported bringing to the full Council the motion of using up to \$55,000 from the Undesignated Fund Balance (UFB) to fund the position. Steve E. asked what FRCOG's policy goals are regarding the use of Undesignated Fund Balance and if the thinking is that system oversight will be a permanent budget expense. Linda said the current request is for FY19 only and that she is unsure of future needs at this point. The towers are aging and current repairs are needed now just to keep it alive, Bill P. interjected.

Ellen M. moved to transfer \$55,000 from the Undesignated Fund Balance to the Franklin County Emergency Communication System budget. Steve E. seconded the motion. All in favor.

4. Executive Committee Update

Bill Perlman, Vice Chair

Bill P. reported that since the Council's last meeting the Executive Committee has:

- Agreed that FRCOG staff should draft a letter supporting the Connecticut River Conservancy's recent recommendations that an alternatives analysis for the Northfield Pumped Storage Facility, including use of a closed loop system, should be conducted. The letter will also expand upon the need for additional recreational facilities on the river and accessible access to the river and related facilities.
- Discussed sections of the FRCOG's lease with the FRTA in an effort to reach a better understanding of our long-term financial obligations and to determine if renegotiation or clarification of the lease is necessary. To this end they instructed the Executive Director to hire an attorney with no pre-existing history with either organization or the lease to review and interpret the lease and determine next steps.

5. Executive Director Update

Linda

Dunlavy

Linda D. highlighted FRCOG staff members' recent work, including:

Great Places — Advocating for Shelburne Falls' recognition as one of five U.S. "Great Neighborhoods" by the American Planning Association. The designation represents the planning "gold standard."

Rural Policy — Among several events across the state, the Rural Policy Advisory Commission plans a listening session Dec 13, at GCC, at which it will outline thoughts about what should be the main focus of the state's rural plan.

Local Hazard Mitigation Plans — Recently, FEMA awarded planning grants to fund Local Hazard Mitigation plan updates for 17 towns. These towns have an opportunity to integrate climate change resiliency into these plan updates.

Flu Season — Flu clinics now are scheduled throughout the county as part of the CPHS 11-town health department. All residents are encouraged to get their flu shots to build community immunity.

Hemp Workshop — The state department of agriculture came to the county to talk about agricultural hemp cultivation to a packed house in September.

Succession Planning — If towns have job openings they'd like filled, let us know. At a recent FRCOG Local Officials workshop, staff agreed to attend a career expo at FC Tech.

Bike Marketing — Planners are making sure that bikers interested in our region as a touring area will find Franklin County bike-tourism ready. A recently embarked upon campaign designates and markets area businesses that provide water, bike racks, bathrooms, and so on, as "Bike Friendly."

New staff — Come in and meet Kala Fisher and Xander Sylvain, our new town accountant and emergency preparedness program assistant, respectively.

6. Franklin Regional Planning Board (FRPB) Update

Jim Basford

Jim B. reported the board members heard a presentation on the Wendell community solar project, now in its beginning stages. Anyone interested can contact Peggy Sloan. The board has spent a lot of time trying to keep up with the recreational marijuana activity in the area. Conway passed changes at their recent town meeting. Transportation planning has been a subject of constant discussion as well.

7. Personnel Committee

Bill Perlman

Bill P. explained that he had no news to report as the Personnel Committee has not met since July.

8. Finance Committee Update

Lynn Sibley

- **Presentation of Fiscal Review and discussion of 2020 budget development**

Lynn and Claire presented a slideshow of the 2020 *Fiscal Review*, pointing out changes to the document this year, including a 3-year budget overview and a 5-year graphic of FRCOG revenues by source.

Lynn explained the budget-building process: FRCOG will establish what its goals are, and the Finance Committee will determine whether these can be funded. Balancing the FRCOG's and the towns' needs is, as ever, a primary objective. Agency-wide and programmatic budgetary priorities for FY2020 include gaining better understanding the FRCOG's financial responsibility as lessee to the FRTA, which might drain a large portion of the budget; updating website and social media platforms; and to determining how to best move forward in the funding of the OPEB.

Linda explained to newcomers that FRCOG used to be part of the Franklin Regional Retirement System, but is now part of state system. Because the agency hasn't yet paid an assessment into the state program, money budgeted for it (should legislation require an assessment be paid) and not used, has been appropriated to the OPEB account for several years. Linda explained that the state retirement trust system will take in towns of any size, adding that since joining, FRCOG has enjoyed a 9% gain.

Lynn invited members to attend Finance Committee meetings to offer budgetary input.

8. Special Presentations

- **10 Years of Climate Resiliency Work in the Deerfield Watershed** Kimberly MacPhee

Kimberly Noake MacPhee, presented Council members with a slideshow featuring the many projects in the Deerfield watershed over the years. *(See slideshow, attached).*

9. Business Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance

Ellen motioned for adjournment. Kayce seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

Documents Distributed:

- Agenda
- Draft minutes of the July 18, 2018 meeting
- October 2018 Updates of FRCOG Initiatives and Projects
- *Request for Funding for Radio System Management and Migration*, memo from Linda Dunlavy, dated October 18.
- Great Libraries Build Communities Planning Workshop flyer
- CPHS Flu Clinic flyer