



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Executive Committee/Economic Development District Governing Board —*MINUTES*

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| Date & Time: | Thursday, May 13 2021 at 5:00 p.m. |
| Location: | Remote meeting using videoconferencing technology |
| Facilitator: | Jay DiPucchio, Chair |

Executive Committee/EDD Board Representatives Present:

- Jay DiPucchio, Regionally Elected
- Jim Basford, FRPB Appointee
- Dani Letourneau, Greenfield Representative
- Kevin Fox, Colrain Representative
- Bill Perlman, Regionally Elected
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Staff Members and Guests Present:

- Linda Dunlavy, Executive Director
- Claire McGinnis, Finance Director
- Bob Dean, Dir. of Regional Services
- Jessica Atwood, Economic Dev. Prog. Manager
- Rebekah Boyd, Admin Services Coordinator
- Phoebe Walker, Dir. of Community Service

1. Review and adopt 3.11.21 Executive Committee meeting minutes

Vice Chair Jim Basford convened the meeting at 5:01 p.m. **Bill P. moved adoption of the 3.11.21 minutes as presented. Kevin F. seconded the motion, which passed with all in favor by voice vote.**

2. Convene as EDD, Review Draft CEDS Annual Performance Report

Chair Jay D. convened the Economic Development District Governing Board meeting. Jessica Atwood presented a slideshow that outlined the Draft 2021 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategic (CEDS) Annual Performance Report, the first of four reports based on the 2020-2025 CEDS Plan, and to be presented for a vote for approval -- after public comment-- at the June 10th EDD Board meeting.

The report primarily examines the year 2019 (with some sections focused on the COVID-19 pandemic,) and includes:

- Franklin County demographic information.
- Changes in the county unemployment rate from 2019 to 2020 (7.4%) and a drop in total workforce in 2020.
- Unemployment claims, with Healthcare & Social Assistance, Accommodation and Food Service, Retail and Education industry sectors most impacted from Feb 2020 to Feb 2021.
- Minor increase in establishments located in Franklin County, with stagnant employment in 2019
- Annual pay up 2.9 % in 2019 from previous year, but still the lowest county rate in state. Health care and manufacturing are top employers in the county.
- List of COVID-19 resources for workers and employees, and communities.

- Examples of ways businesses embraced technology and accommodations, which employed social distancing and followed the state emergency guidelines in order to stay open.
- Action plan project updates.

Jessica noted that the US Economic Development Administration provided new guidance that will be incorporated into the final draft report. She encouraged members to email any comments to her before June 4, so it can be incorporated into the final draft to be presented for a June 10 vote.

3. Discuss scope and cost of a regional COVID-19 After Action Report

Linda reported that staff are very interested in conducting a COVID-19 after-action report that looks at not only how the FRCOG performed in response to the pandemic, but also how the county and region responded. She explained that among emergency response entities in the region emerged a push and pull about the responsibilities of the FRCOG. This made for a less efficient pandemic response.

Staff estimate the after action report will cost \$15 to 20k, and if the Executive Committee agrees, staff will take the funding request to the Finance Committee and then to the Council in July. She suggested that a neutral outside evaluator would be best to create the report. Bill felt an after action was a good idea and Jay agreed, having heard from Tracy how different the role of planning for emergencies is compared to response, especially in regards to understanding how and when to integrate with other responders. Consensus of members was to move ahead with the plan.

4. Commonwealth of MA Interoperable Radio System (CoMIRS) update

Radios

The first Motorola radio order has partially shipped. More Motorolas and the majority of the Kenwoods were ordered today. Next week state police will train programmers and all equipment will be configured the same. Once a town's full order is available and programmed, departments can pick them up in Deerfield. Departments will sign off confirming that the order has been fulfilled and stating that they understand that, 1.) ownership is fully transferred to their department 2.) they are responsible for maintenance and replacement; 3.) upgrades were a one-time offer; 4.) they are responsible for vehicle installation and work (but can be reimbursed for up to \$300 of that cost); and 5) municipalities are responsible for paying FRCOG for upgrades not covered by grants. For departments that applied for the firefighter grant, invoices will reflect the amount of the award subtracted from the total cost.

Migration and Decommissioning

EOTTS has added a channel and migration will occur as towns receive radios, with staff member Kurt Seaman heading up the FCECS decommissioning. Joe Cuneo and Walter Tibbets will create training manuals. Greenfield and Montague dispatch centers are undergoing an upgrade. FCECS can't be fully decommissioned until a paging plan is in place.

Linda reported that Dan Nietzsche, who has worked on this effort since joining FRCOG is leaving FRCOG. Jay expressed his frustration over the disruption, saying FRCOG can't afford to lose anyone involved, and support should be extended however possible. Asked if Kurt will consult, Linda explained that other Emergency Prep folks will step in on the EOTTS contract, and Kurt will handle the dispatch center work. FRCOG may need to ask for more of Kurt's time going forward.

5. Updates: Juneteenth, vaccination clinics, office return

Juneteenth

Linda explained that she mistakenly believed they were ready to take the question of extending a Juneteenth employee holiday to Council in April, but realized consensus was not reached among the committees in time. Staff hope to bring the change in the Personnel Policy to Council in July.

Vaccination Clinics

With six more clinic offerings planned over the next two weeks and one final clinic scheduled for the middle of June, the vaccination effort is nearing the finish line. More than 25,000 doses have been administered by the collaborative. Currently the clinics are trying to find and serve the vaccine-hesitant population. Conversations are happening with small venues, the Community Health Center, The Chamber of Commerce, and schools, to be sure vaccination continues. As of today, 59% of Franklin County adults have had their first dose; 43% are completely vaccinated.

Office Return

Ninety-five percent (95%) of FRCOG staff are vaccinated. All staff will be asked to return to the office on June 1 on a part-time basis. FRCOG is investing in tech upgrades in the library and small meeting rooms to accommodate both in-person and virtual attendees of meetings. FRTA is investing in equipment for the Allen Conference room, installing equipment that can be synced with the FRCOG's. FRTA saying they won't open the building until August. Jay lauded the FRCOG plan, feeling it's wise to be cautious. Bill asked if staff had thought about mandating vaccination. Jay suggested FRCOG await case law on such a mandate, to keep FRCOG from being the guinea pigs.

6. Business not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of meeting

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Bob Dean presented the newly released parameters of the ARPA funding mechanism, which is providing federal stimulus funding to address the impacts of COVID-19. Unlike previous stimulus funding, ARPA will provide money for state and local COVID-19 relief through the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. Federal funding amounts are still being finalized. The Mass Municipal Association estimates 1/3 of total (\$6,923,645) will go directly to municipalities. County allocation through state to municipalities is 2/3 of total (\$13,631,642) Local governments will receive ½ the money in May, 2021 and the other ½ approximately 12 months later, in 2022. Funding must be obligated by December 31, 2024, and spent by December 31, 2026.

Federal Guidance

Interim federal guidance was issued on May 10. Massachusetts has not yet issued any specific guidance to local governments, but the interim federal guidance lists these four funding objectives:

1. Support urgent COVID-19 response efforts
2. Replace lost public sector revenue
3. Support immediate economic stabilization for households and businesses
4. Address systemic public health and economic challenges that have contributed to the unequal impact of the pandemic on certain populations

Ineligible uses are pension fund deposits; debt service; legal settlements or judgments; deposits into reserves and general infrastructure spending not part of a water, sewer, or broadband project.

Bob suggested it's It is not too early for towns to start thinking about how best to spend this money and that involving multiple local stakeholders early on will yield a better long-term result. In addition to the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, a number of funding streams from ARPA that will be coming to Massachusetts.

Bill P. moved committee adjournment. Jim B. seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Jay D. adjourned the meeting at 6:03 PM.

Documents Distributed:

- Agenda
- Draft 3.11.21 Executive Committee minutes
- EDD Governing Board slideshow presentation

Minutes taken by Rebekah Boyd.