



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

COUNCIL — *MINUTES*

Date & Time:	Thursday, April 15, 2021/ 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.
Location:	Open meeting accessed remotely on Zoom by video, or by telephone
Facilitator:	Trevor McDaniel, Chair

COUNCILOR ATTENDEES:

Jennifer Morse, Ashfield (left before 2nd vote) ; **Stanley Garland**, Bernardston (left before final vote); **Heather Butler**, Buckland; **Kevin Fox**, *Secretary/Clerk*, Colrain; **Philip Kantor**, Conway; **Trevor McDaniel**, *Chair*, Deerfield; **Bill Bembury**, Erving; **Greg Snedeker**, *Vice Chair*, Gill; **Dani Letourneau**, Greenfield; **Brian DeVriese**, Heath (left before 2nd vote); **Patricia Duffy** Leverett (left before final vote); **Michele Giarusso**, Leyden; **Bee Jacque**, Northfield; **Jane Peirce**, Orange; **Bob Manners**, Shelburne (6:07 pm); **Ellen McKay**, Shutesbury (left before final vote); **Tom Fydenkevez**, Sunderland; **Lynn Sibley**, Whately; **Jay DiPucchio**, Regionally Elected; **Bill Perlman**, Regionally Elected; **Jim Basford**, FRPB.

ABSENT: **Sarah Reynolds**, Charlemont; **Hussain Hamdan**, Hawley; **Alice Houghtaling**, Monroe; **Rich Kuklewicz**, Montague; **Wayne Hachey**, New Salem; **Janice Boudreau**, Rowe; **Larry Pruyne**, Warwick; **Michael Idione**, Wendell

STAFF: **Linda Dunlavy**, Executive Director; **Claire McGinnis**, Finance Director; **Rebekah Boyd**, Admin Services Coordinator; **Phoebe Walker**, Director of Community Services; **Bob Dean**, Director of Regional Services; **Jessica Atwood**, Economic Development Program Manager.

1. Call to order and roll call	Chair Trevor McDaniel
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The chair convened the meeting at 5:34 p.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum met with 20 members and 77.264 % of the weighted vote of the total membership in attendance.

2. Adopt 1/28/21 minutes	Trevor McDaniel
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Greg S. moved to adopt the minutes of the January, 2021 meeting. Ellen M. seconded the motion, which passed by roll call vote, with all members voting in favor.

3. Council Update	Trevor McDaniel
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Meetings

Trevor reminded councilors that all FRCOG Council meetings will be held via Zoom until we can safely meet again in the Olver Transit Center. Upcoming meetings: **July 15, 2021** and **October 21, 2021** at 5:30 p.m. Trevor asked members to please state their name and the town they represent when addressing the Council.

4. Executive Committee Update	Jay DiPucchio
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Jay reported that since the last Council meeting, the FRCOG Executive Committee:

- Reviewed, and agreed to support the Rural Policy Advisory Commission (RPAC) letter to the Legislative Rural Caucus, in which RPAC outlined bills to be considered this year by

Commonwealth lawmakers. Priorities include Acts that promote rural job promotion; special education, Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT), and road-paving funding formula reforms, as well as Acts that improve local and regional health systems and generate funding for clean energy, affordable housing, and more.

- Voted to advocate for legislation filed to resolve the retirement pension payment issue
- Learned that the contract between the state’s Executive Office of Technology and Security (EOTTS) and FRCOG has arrived, includes funding for all agreed-upon mobiles and radios plus funding for programming and an installation allowance for all departments.
- Discussed when and how to best welcome staff back into the office once the majority, or all, are vaccinated
- Heard early information about the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)
- Learned about FRCOG’s partnership with Greenfield and sub-regional Emergency Dispensing Sites to hold vaccination clinics. The clinics – staffed by local volunteers, boards of health, and FRCOG’s Public Health and Emergency Prep employees – ran efficiently, and were well-received by the public.

Bob Dean explained that final figures for ARPA relief are not available yet, but indicators suggest that the state will channel 1/3 of the funds directly to towns, and another 2/3 of the funds to counties (probably via the towns). Greg S. asked if any of the ARPA funds can be used to assist school districts, and if advocacy for school districts is part of the RPAC’s focus. Linda assured him that such advocacy is a focus of the RPAC and offered to keep the Council informed of what we learn about allowed expenditures.

5. Executive Director Update & Special Project Report: Vaccine Clinics

Linda Dunlavy

Linda briefed the Council on recent FRCOG programmatic initiatives (*See Council Updates for details*), including the following:

CoMIRS —FRCOG received and distributed a grant to upgrade dispatch centers in Montague and Greenfield, and a fire fighter grant, to assist several municipal fire departments with extra costs for radio system equipment. Radios will be delivered soon; the project is rapidly moving forward.

Workshop —“ Vaccine Hesitancy” will run April 29. All interested are invited.

Train Service — The Vermonter is returning in July and FRCOG planners have begun discussing the launch of the marketing campaign.

Special Project Report: COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics

Linda presented a slideshow that outlined the work of the Regional COVID-19 Vaccination Collaborative, formed to serve the region as no mass vaccination sites existed in the County. The Collaborative consisted of FRCOG staff members; regional Emergency Dispensing Site (EDS) teams; members of the Medical Reserve Corps; City of Greenfield, Town of Orange, and Franklin County Sheriff’s Department staff; and hundreds of other volunteers, all partnering to vaccinate the county. She shared data regarding the numbers of vaccines given, the demographics of those vaccinated, and current percentages of those who are fully and partially vaccinated in the county; and outlined challenges related to state and federal regulations.

Linda explained that Greenfield will soon be winding down its operation, and that other collaborative offerings, which initially existed as “spoke” clinics, traveling to West, North, and South Counties, have moved to Greenfield Community College (GCC), after a recent vote of stakeholders agreed that a single, centralized clinic was the next best step.

Tom F. expressed his sense of connection and honor to have served as a volunteer among others in this endeavor.

The question of when to stop offering clinics and how to measure success is now on the minds of Vax Collaborative organizers. Should they use a percentage of residents vaccinated? Stop once clinics begin to serve less than a particular percentage of county residents? When volunteers can no longer fill available appointments, or find volunteers to run the clinics?

Trevor M. suggested we are a long way from that point, that many residents still aren’t eligible to be vaccinated, and that a massive need still exists. Dani reported that though Greenfield is ramping down the John Zon clinic, she imagines the city can do smaller clinics in town halls. Philip K. agreed that smaller and smaller venues, such as in the Hilltown, may be needed before closing up shop. Teens also will be looking to get shots, and younger kids, for summer camp participation, when the age of eligibility lowers to 12 years, added Greg S. functions

6. Finance Committee Update – Vax Clinic Expenses/Revenues Chair, Lynn Sibley & Claire McGinnis

As introductory information, Claire reported that the FRCOG General Fund likely will have up 250K in surplus, in large part because the budget was created 15 months ago, and since its drafting, more grants and work (including vaccine clinic work) have made it both possible and necessary to hire new staff, resulting in increased indirect revenue to the Gen Fund. Expense budgets are right on track and the surplus is not a result of assessments, she added.

Clinics were held Feb 24 to April 2, 2021, there will be more and the total expected cost is approximately \$361,000. FRCOG plans to bill patient health insurance as it has in the past for flu clinics, using UMASS billing services. Reimbursements expected in the fall are estimated at \$634,630.

Claire reported that the Finance Committee met before the Council meeting to review FY21 projections and clinic expenses and FY22 estimated revenues, and also discussed the need to be prepared for future emergencies. The Committee recommends that the Council approve use of the FY21 projected general fund revenue surplus to pay for vaccination clinic costs. To do this requires a budget amendment. The Committee further recommends creation of an account to hold the expenses, which could become an emergency fund for the next regional emergency event, such as booster shots, other illnesses, and weather-related emergencies. (*See the Clinic Financing Presentation slides for projections and other details*).

Council members discussed the possibility of making the emergency fund a permanent protected funding resource or possibly returning it to the general fund down the road; it’s similarity to a municipal revolving fund; revolving fund parameters to consider, such as authority for its use, a cap on spending, and so on. Jay D. suggested that, given how variable the numbers are currently, the Council proceed with the motion, with a plan to revisit the operability and fine-tuning in July. Asked how creating this account helps the FRCOG, Claire explained that it would keep the COG from ending the

year in deficit in this special activity fund. Ellen offered her support for a dedicated pot for handling emergencies, reminding the Council that this time last year they had no clue about all the costs that would incur with the pandemic.

The committee discussed whether it was necessary to consider 3 motions: First, to increase the general fund by up to \$200,000 to fund a contingency expense for COVID-19 vax clinics; a second to establish the revolving account; and a third to establish the Finance Committee as the approving authority. Claire reported that a vote to create the fund is not required.

Trevor M. moved to increase the general fund by up to \$200,000 to fund a contingency expense for COVID-19 vaccination clinics, to be funded by FY21 revenues from grant reimbursements. Dani seconded the motion, which passed with all in favor by roll-call vote. (76.631% of the weight of the total membership in favor).

Michele G. moved to establish the Finance Committee as the approving authority for budget authorizations of the vaccination clinic account. Ellen M. seconded the motion.

Clinic account use parameters discussed included: what percentage of the balance to retain in the fund at all times, if any; requiring a full Council vote for approval of a request to use funds over a certain percentage of the account's total; having the full Council always be the approving authority, and the challenges of doing so, given the infrequency of meetings. Trevor remarked that the FRCOG Finance Committee is there for a reason, and in this case, to address emergencies and update the Council at the quarterly meetings. Jane P. agreed, expressing her trust in the Finance Committee to make these decisions.

Trevor M. moved to amend the motion replacing "vaccination clinic" with "regional emergency." Michele G. seconded the amendment. The amendment passed with all in favor by roll-call vote. (76.631% of the weight of the total membership voting in favor).

Trevor M. moved to amend that motion by adding that spending requests in excess of 75% of the revolving fund's balance require authorization of the Full Council. Michele G. seconded the amendment. The amendment passed with all in favor by roll-call vote. (76.631% of the weight of the total membership in favor).

Trevor moved to pass the original motion, as amended, to make the Finance Committee the primary approving authority for budget authorizations of the Regional Emergency Account (as established by COVID-19 Vax Clinic operations and reimbursements), and to require full FRCOG Council approval of spending in excess of 75% of the fund's balance. Ellen seconded the motion. Council voted by roll call on the amended motion, which passed with 73.819% of the total membership of the Council voting in favor, and the member from Conway (2.81) voting not in favor.

7. Planning Board Update

Jim Basford

Jim reported that the planning board met to discuss the FERC relicensing of the FirstLight hydroelectric and energy storage facilities.

8. Personnel Committee Update

Bill Perlman

Bill P. presented the proposed FRCOG Personnel Policy “workplace location” language for a second reading and vote.

Bill P. moved approval of the proposed FRCOG Personnel Policy “workplace location” language. Bill B. seconded the motion, which passed with all in favor by rollcall vote and all 65.697% of the total weight of the Council still in attendance voting in favor.

9. Special Projects Presentation: Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan

Jess Atwood

Because the meeting had run ½ hour over its typical ending time, consensus was to hear the special presentation another time, if possible.

10. Business Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance

Trevor McDaniel

No unanticipated business was discussed.

Bill P. moved to adjourn, Michele G. seconded, and by voice vote, the motion passed with all in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:32 PM.

Documents Distributed:

- Agenda
- Draft minutes of the April 15, 2021 meeting
- April 2021 FRCOG Council/Programmatic Updates
- Personnel Policy Second Reading: *Work Location Language*
- *Vaccination Clinics* slideshow
- *Vaccination Clinic Expenses and Revenues* slideshow

Minutes taken by Rebekah Boyd.