



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Executive Committee

MINUTES

Date & Time:	Thursday, October 14, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.
Location:	FRCOG, Olver Transit Center, 12 Olive Street, Greenfield MA, Downstairs Allen Room
Facilitator:	Jay DiPucchio, Chair; Newly elected chair, Bill Perlman

Executive Committee/EDD Board Representatives Present:

- Jay DiPucchio, Regionally Elected
- Dani Letourneau, Greenfield Alternate
- Julia Blyth, FRPB representative
- Kevin Fox, Colrain Representative
- Bill Perlman, Regionally Elected

Staff Members and Guests Present:

- Linda Dunlavy, Executive Director
- Claire McGinnis, Finance Director
- Keith Barnicle, Economic Development Special Projects Planner
- Rebekah Boyd, Admin Services Coordinator
- Bob Dean, Regional Services Director

1. Review and adopt 9.7.21 Executive Committee meeting minutes

Chair Jay D. convened the meeting at 5:05 p.m.

Bill P. moved adoption of the 9.7.21 minutes as presented. Dani seconded the motion, which passed with all in favor, by roll-call vote.

2. Reorganize

Jay nominated Bill for the role of Executive Committee chair, which Bill accepted. Jay volunteered to serve as Vice Chair and Kevin volunteered to be Secretary.

Jay moved election of the above slate. Kevin seconded the motion, which passed with all in favor by roll-call vote.

3. Welcome and orientation for new member, Julia Blyth

Following introductions and welcome, staff and committee members described the responsibilities of the Executive Committee to Julia, who responded with enthusiasm to her new role as Franklin Regional Planning Board appointee to the board.

4. Receive Erving county road petition for Poplar Mountain Rd./ Set public hearing date and time

Bob Dean explained that Poplar Mountain Road in Erving sustained considerable damage during a recent summer storm. As town employees began to look into repairs and reengineering, they discovered it is a county road, so will ask to have it discontinued as such and to become a town road. They are aware that to do so will require a town meeting vote affirming this decision. The town plans to restore the road without any major changes. It will not disappear as a public way.

The town had expected to get the petition to the committee for this meeting but ran out of time. They anticipate the petition will be ready in time for the next meeting. The committee discussed possible avenues for holding a view, if needed, including virtually.

5. Update on pandemic response after action review progress

Linda reminded the committee that the agency put out an RFP to hire a consultant for a COVID after-action review for FRCOG and the region as a whole. FRCOG received two responses, and chose to work with the Ardent Decision Group, made up of retired military leadership, who were part of major emergency response efforts, including Tropical Storm Irene, Hurricane Katrina, and during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Much of their work is similar to FRCOG's: lots of responsibility with little authority. Efficacy analysis will be the goal of their report, Linda explained, not customer satisfaction. To clarify roles and responsibilities for future emergency events, they will dig into what happened, how well it happened, and how it should it happen going forward.

6. Update on Franklin County Emergency communication System (FCECS) transfer to state system (COMIRS)

Claire reported that as of October 4, FRCOG's Xander Sylvain estimated 95% of the radios had been programmed and delivered, and towns/response units are 45% migrated. Supply chain issues have slowed the delivery of portable radios needing unavailable chips. Some towns are using portable and mobile radios at the same time. Seven installers are working to install equipment into vehicles but the process is moving slower than staff had hoped, which slows down the transition. Communities are reporting some gaps for which the Commonwealth's advisory group is providing support.

Linda added that testing is underway to ensure a good paging solution for the whole county. Xander suggests it will be at least 2 years before the migration is complete. The Commonwealth either must add equipment to towers or utilize a new technology, before 100% of the county can receive pages.

The issue of the Motorola radio batteries not holding a charge is ongoing. Staff pushed the company to replace all batteries, although not all are faulty. So far, Motorola has been cooperative about coming up with solutions.

Linda expects to host a public meet and greet with state officials soon, to celebrate the transfer, although FRCOG will have no say about when that will occur. FRCOG will invite the community.

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

Several items of business arose since the agenda was posted:

Emergency Reserve

Upon review of the Council minutes, Linda realized staff forgot to bring the Emergency Response Reserve language back to the full Council, so will instead ask the Executive Committee to consider that language at its next meeting. Because of a miscalculation regarding the number of people from whom FRCOG could expect insurance reimbursement for clinic costs and the greatly reduced number of clinics and individuals vaccinated at clinics in June, it's likely that the reserve account will contain only \$80,000 - \$100,000.

Members asked if FRCOG should plan to contribute to the fund going forward. Claire explained that as a reserve, there should be no expectations of revenues revolving or renewing. If members wanted to put up to \$30,000 for budgeted use each year, the Executive Director could use it in an emergency

without the Council having to meet. Budgeting a portion every year might be wise to respond to emergencies that unfold, staff suggested, adding, however, that the region just endured an once-in-a-lifetime event without such a reserve.

Kevin asked if money thresholds still make sense given the considerable change in the reserve's holdings. The auditor required and the Finance Committee agreed that the account needed to stay within the Council budget, so it is now within the confines of Council and is part of our normal budget.

Staff Vaccination

As a federal vendor, FRCOG is requiring proof of vaccination or weekly testing of all employees. This includes the Executive Committee, so members will be asked to do the same. To date, staff are 94% compliant. Members requested a reminder.

State Auditor Meeting

Linda and the Executive Directors of the Pioneer Valley and Berkshire Planning Agencies recently met with MA Auditor Bump, who encouraged the three RPAs to, among other recommendations, urge the state to pay off Broadband debt using state revenue surplus and American Rescue Act funds.

Redistricting

In response to the state's legislative redistricting proposal, Shutesbury will formally object with their concerns and asks FRCOG to respond. Dani said that Greenfield city councilors and the mayor also have concerns, as the proposal splits the city into two legislative districts. The consensus was that FRCOG should weigh in on the proposal.

Dani L. moved committee adjournment. Julia seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote. Bill P. adjourned the meeting at 5:50 p.m.

Documents Distributed:

- Agenda
- Draft 9.7.21 Executive Committee minutes

Minutes taken by Rebekah Boyd.