



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee

Date:	August 17, 2021
Time:	2:00 p.m.
Location:	Virtual Meeting via Zoom due to COVID-19 state of emergency. (Meeting ID: 892 6102 8971)
Duration:	hour, minutes
Facilitator:	J. Atwood

CEDS Committee Attendees:

- MJ Adams, City of Greenfield
- Rebecca Bialecki, MassHire Franklin Hampshire Workforce Board
- Gary Dillensneider, FCCDC Loan Review Committee
- Gina Govoni, Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority/Rural Development, Inc.
- Jennifer Gross, Wendell Planning Board, Franklin Regional Planning Board
- Walter Ramsey, Town of Montague
- Judy Raper, Greenfield Community College
- Nan Riebschlaeger, Wendell Energy Committee
- Diana Szynal, Franklin County Chamber of Commerce

Guests:

- Keith Bailey, Greenfield Community College
- Brianna Drohen, LaunchSpace
- Amy Shapiro, Franklin County Community Development Corporation

FRCOG Staff:

- Linda Dunlavy, Executive Director
- Jessica Atwood, Economic Development Program Manager
- Liz Jacobson-Carroll, Administrative Services Assistant

1 – Call the meeting to order, a round of introductions, and a Vote to Approve Minutes of June 8, 2021: Gary Dillensneider, Chair and Jessica Atwood, FRCOG

At 2:04 p.m., J. Atwood called the meeting to order. The meeting was held via Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic; participants introduced themselves. Adams motioned to approve the minutes of the June 8, 2021 meeting, as amended, Biackecki seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously by roll call with one abstention (Govoni).

2 – Presentation on the EDA’s ARPA funded Notice of Funding Opportunities and Discussion of Potential Project Applications:
Jessica Atwood, FRCOG

Atwood referenced the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the federal legislation of March 21, 2021 that is providing economic relief from the effects of the pandemic at municipal, state and federal levels. Dunlavy clarified that the funds available to the county are being portioned to the municipalities without FRCOG involvement. (The municipal allocation and this county re-allocation for the 26 towns of Franklin County equals almost \$21 million.) Atwood summarized the funding opportunities at the three levels:

- Municipal governments can use direct funds for a variety of eligible uses, including economic development--investing in broadband, water or wastewater infrastructure, or providing assistance to small businesses or nonprofits, and more.
- The State has not yet announced its application procedures, but will be allocating funds for a variety of grant programs, including workforce development, downtown recovery, tourism & cultural assets, and infrastructure, she explained.
- Federal funds from ARPA will be distributed via the EDA, among other agencies. The EDA recently released its Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) with application instructions. While there are six, the two most relevant to Franklin County are for Economic Adjustment Assistance (applications due no later than March 31, 2022) and Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation (applications due no later than January 31, 2022). Atwood summarized key points for applicants. These pertain to following directions and early submittal; eligibility; alignment with CEDS, EDA and regional resilience priorities; outcomes pertaining to economic recovery and job retention/creation; the required 20% in non-federal matching funds; and award and project completion dates. Regarding the other NOFOs, Atwood noted that FRCOG is working with other Regional Planning Agencies and associations to explore possibilities for funding of regional planning, projects, and programs.

Atwood reminded attendees to consider which ARPA funding source (i.e. federal, state or local) may best fit each project, and offered her assistance in making that determination. Dunlavy encouraged attendees to apply for funding; the governor appears to be leaning toward directing much of the \$5 billion coming to the state to Gateway Cities, she said, not necessarily to rural towns, so local efforts are needed.

Atwood reviewed a list of potential Franklin County projects identified in the 2020 CEDS Plan. Atwood will reach out to the stakeholders to make sure that they are aware of the new funding opportunities. Additional project ideas suggested and discussed by attendees included:

- Franklin County Fairgrounds
- Expanding existing wastewater facilities, building new facilities for towns that will need them, and an anaerobic sludge digester for Greenfield or other regional sludge solution. Atwood noted that CARES Act funding has already enabled FRCOG to hire Tighe & Bond to research wastewater infrastructure and needs across the county; the report, with recommendations, will not be ready until January, however, so its finding cannot be addressed with 2021 ARPA funds.
- Collaboration between tourism, recreation and hospitality to “build a week”.
- Encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship in at-risk youth groups while also attracting young entrepreneurs to the region.

3 – Other business not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance, and adjourn: Gary Dillensneider, Chair

At the next meeting, in October, Atwood will review applications for the funding, she said, and will prompt the group to set policy regarding remote/hybrid/in-person meetings going forward.

Szynał made a motion to adjourn, Adams seconded the motion, attendees assented unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gary Dillensneider". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Gary Dillensneider, Chair