



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee

Date:	February 17, 2022
Time:	1:00 p.m.
Location:	Virtual Meeting via Zoom due to COVID-19 state of emergency. (Meeting ID: 640 658 461)
Duration:	1 hour, 30 minutes
Facilitator:	J. Atwood

CEDS Committee Attendees:

- MJ Adams, City of Greenfield
- Jenna Day, RCAP Solutions
- Gary Dillensneider, FCCDC Loan Review Committee
- Maura Geary, MassHire Franklin Hampshire Career Center
- 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
- Shelby Snow, Northfield Golf Club, Northfield Area Tourism & Business Association
- Diana Szynal, Franklin County Chamber of Commerce
- Alec Wade, Town of Orange
- John Waite, Franklin County Community Development Corporation

Guests:

- Zach Chornyak, Tighe & Bond
- Pete Valinski, Tighe & Bond
- Jan Ameen, Franklin County Solid Waste Management District
- Sarah Lang, Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation
- Rebekah Novak, RCAP Solutions
- Mariah Kurtz, Town of Erving

FRCOG Staff:

- Linda Dunlavy, Executive Director
- Peggy Sloan, Director of Planning and Development
- Jessica Atwood, Economic Development Program Manager
- Keith Barnicle, Economic Development Special Projects Planner
- Liz Jacobson-Carroll, Administrative Services Assistant

1 – Call the meeting to order, and round of introductions: Jessica Atwood, FRCOG

Atwood called the on-line meeting to order, and attendees introduced themselves.

2 – Vote to Approve Minutes from August 17, 2021: Jessica Atwood, FRCOG

Adams moved to approve the minutes of August 17, 2021; Ramsey seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously by roll call with two abstentions (Geary, Snow) and three not yet in attendance (Kurtz, Raper, Szyal).

3 – Presentation on Draft Franklin County Public Water and Wastewater Study: Zach Chornyak and Peter Vilinski, Tighe & Bond

Atwood explained that the FRCOG hired Tighe & Bond through a public procurement process to conduct a county-wide study of public water and wastewater systems. Tighe & Bond’s assessment of existing public water systems in 15 towns and wastewater systems in 13 towns, as well as the potential for each of these systems in 3 towns, was funded through a supplemental planning grant from the federal Economic Development Administration (EDA), Atwood said. Introducing Tighe & Bond’s work, Chornyak indicated that the ability of systems to withstand climate change impacts was included, as were recommendations and cost estimates, updated GIS mapping, and the identification of potential capital funding sources. The updated maps are based on source material of varied quality, but are now in a consistent format. The sources to create the GIS maps came from some of the towns, Tighe & Bond, and FRCOG, as well as towns’ paper maps, earlier studies, and conversations with current operators. Chornyak summarized the financial needs of the water systems in the 15 towns at approximately \$120 million, and those of the sewer systems in the 13 towns at approximately \$160 million. He noted that these financial needs include both short-term as well as long-term improvement projects.

Beginning with the sewer systems, he described the existing infrastructure and conditions of Greenfield’s system, which is the largest in the group, and Shelburne’s smaller system. He then reviewed past studies for proposed sewer systems in the village centers of Bernardston, Colrain and Conway, highlighting both assets and challenges. In a similar manner, but for drinking water systems, he described those existing in Greenfield and Shelburne, and those proposed for the village centers of Erving, Charlemont and Conway. Finally, he itemized funding programs, for both types of systems, available from state and federal agencies, and other sources. The recent federal infrastructure bill will likely go through these programs commented Atwood. Adams initiated discussion regarding the need for additional administrative staff to manage public interface, requests for hookups, initiate new connections, ensure transparency, etc.. Discussion topics included asbestos pipes, groundwater exploration and wells, siting concerns, soil conditions, PFAS in water and sludge, sludge hauling, inter-municipal agreements, layering zoning information on GIS maps, asset management studies that consider the impacts of system failure, and building small systems with expansion potential in order to

4 – Regional Economic Development Updates: Jessica Atwood, FRCOG

To provide a snapshot on the county’s economy. Atwood shared 2020 Census data and graphs. These

establishments, average monthly employment, total wages, unemployment rates, and the number employed relative to the size of the labor force from 2015-2020. Regarding the 2021 ARPA, she indicated that funding opportunities remain at the federal, state and local levels, including over \$20.9 million coming to Franklin County municipalities in two tranches. Atwood described the two county proposals for federal EDA Economic Adjustment Assistance funding: FRCOG is seeking to sustain staffing capacity to implement recovery and resilience plans, the public water and wastewater study,

and the Deerfield River Outdoor Recreation Study; and the Town of Orange/OEDIC is seeking to expand the Randall Pond Industrial Park infrastructure. While describing other EDA programs, she noted a proposal from a coalition looking to bolster “bio-manufacturing” training, facilities, and new ventures. FRCOG and the FCCDC offered to assist municipalities interested in using local ARPA funds to assist small businesses negatively impacted by the pandemic.

Atwood provided updates on other projects. Rapid Recovery Plans have been completed for downtown Greenfield, Turners Falls, Northfield’s Main Street corridor, the Village of Shelburne Falls, and Sunderland center, and will help towns prioritize the work ahead. The Deerfield River Outdoor Recreation Study will include three components: an assessment and recommendations on tourism infrastructure and needs, the identification of potential public communication access points along the river, and the development of emergency access signage and mapping. Finally, she referenced progress on private municipal projects of interest in Deerfield (Treehouse Brewing, the Oxford site), Montague (Railroad Salvage site), Buckland & Shelburne (Village Summit, former Buckland Highway garage) and Erving (IP Millers Falls Papermill site).

5 – Other business not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance, and adjourn.

The next meeting will take place in late April or early May, followed by another in early June.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00.

Respectfully submitted by:

Gary Dillensneider, Chair

