



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Executive Committee

MINUTES

Date & Time:	Thursday, March 10, 2022, 5:00 p.m.
Location:	Meeting held with video conferencing technology
Facilitator:	Bill Perlman, Chair

Executive Committee Representatives Present:

- Bill Perlman, Regionally Elected
- Dani Letourneau, Council Appointee
- Julia Blyth, FRPB representative
- Kevin Fox, Council Appointee
- Jay DiPucchio, Regionally Elected

Staff Members:

- Linda Dunlavy, Executive Director
- Rebekah Boyd, Admin Services Coordinator

1. Review and adopt 2.10.22 Executive Committee meeting minutes

Chair Bill Perlman convened the meeting at 5:00 p.m. **Julia moved adoption of the 2.10.22 minutes. Kevin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously, by roll-call vote.**

2. COVID-19 After Action Review (AAR), pending receipt of draft

FRCOG received the draft AAR and has returned it to consultants at Ardent Group with clarifying questions, Linda reported. Based on survey responses and interviews with regional stakeholders, Ardent’s preliminary recommendations as follows:

- FRCOG should have a formal role in regional response coordination
- Structural and procedural changes will make FRCOG services more efficient and understandable
- Reorganize the internal structure of FRCOG to create an Emergency Management (EM) Department
- Expand the Emergency Preparedness Program to include emergency response and/or coordination. The EM Department would encompass:
 - ❖ The Regional Emergency Preparedness Committee (REPC)
 - ❖ The county emergency radio system (FCECS/CoMIRS)
 - ❖ The Health & Medical Coordinating Coalition (HMCC)
 - ❖ The Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council (WRHSAC)
- Establish the Franklin County Regional Emergency Planning Committee (currently the REPC) as the County’s primary all-hazards planning body
- Move public health preparedness (MAPHCO) from Emergency Preparedness to Public Health.
- Create a single FRCOG Emergency Coordination Plan
- Prevent redundant, inconsistent, or conflicting information from the FRCOG
- Formally establish a FRCOG Multi-Agency Coordination Center or Fusion Center

- Revamp MAPHCO to reduce the number of Emergency Dispensing Sites (EDS) teams and clarify the service distinction between MAPHCO (county-wide) and CPHS (member municipalities)

The committee was pleased with the idea of having a single playbook for emergency response that acknowledges that municipalities have varying assets and capacities to bring to any operation. Such a plan would see towns joining the response effort at varying times depending on the nature of the emergency and on municipal assets.

Members asked if they will be able to see the survey questions and answers. Linda said yes, speculating that responses will reveal that municipalities are ambivalent about giving FRCOG a greater emergency coordination role. She also told the committee that the REPC, as it is currently configured, has limited funding, and will need to find a new funding source as it transitions to having a broader overarching role. In addition, she reported that some municipalities seek to better understand the difference between public health service received as a municipal member of the CPHS district, and public health service for those municipalities that are not assessed for membership in the health district, but are members of FRCOG. One goal of reorganization would be to clarify this.

3. Commonwealth Interoperable Radio System (CoMIRS) Administrative Issues

Staff seeks clarification regarding the degree with which FRCOG will continue in its role as an intermediary between Franklin County towns and Executive Office of Technology Services and Security (EOTSS). For example, it is FRCOG’s assumption that staff will bulk-buy pagers and manage distribution, similar to the radio-buying process last year, but to date, no arrangement has been made. FRCOG recently communicated with towns to say that staff are looking for funding to cover the cost of this next step, but also asked them to hold back some of their American Rescue Plan Act distribution, in case municipalities need to pony up the money. FRCOG has invoiced EOTSS for \$1.8 M of reimbursement for last year’s radio purchases.

FRCOG’s monthly meetings with EOTSS soon will be divided into 2 meetings: one for administrative planning and one for addressing technical challenges. Issues requiring procedural clarity and the agency’s role in their resolution include:

- Addressing the dead spot in Erving Center
- Responding to Baystate Health’s request for use of the CoMIRS system
- Determining which towers are useful to the communication system, and dismantling/selling old, unneeded towers
- The process municipalities should use for buying additional equipment

Linda was pleased to report that after jumping through many hoops, FRCOG finally has permission to take down the Royalston tower. Although FRCOG signed on to taking responsibility for some intervention when problems arise, Bill opined that the dead spot in the center of Erving — not a woody outback but a town’s population center — is CoMIRS’ problem to fix.

4. Succession Planning update

Staff discovered a grant source providing \$35,000 a year for professional development --- one arm of the succession planning strategy. FRCOG will offer trainings aimed at all employees and for those

interested in leadership at the agency. The administrative staff are also looking at FRCOGs grading system and salary ranges with consultants at the Employees Assistant Program.

5. Communications update

Linda reported that the newly created Communications Manager is already reaping benefit. Among other tasks, Mark drafted the RFP for the website overhaul designer (a project stalled by lack of capacity and Covid) and is reworking the annual report to make it a more engaging document and FRCOG's services to municipalities more apparent. This week he is helping Linda to strategize and write briefs for gubernatorial candidates, outlining rural challenges and offering solutions, with advancing infrastructure equity in the state's rural regions among them. The creation of this position has helped FRCOG tackle projects that were previously stalled or inconceivable.

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

The committee discussed the county's COVID-19 case counts and the upcoming forward turning of clocks and decided to hold the next quarterly Council meeting in person, and to switch the date to April 28, when the Ardent Group can attend and present their COVID After Action Report.

Dani moved committee adjournment. Kevin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by voice vote. Bill adjourned the meeting at 5:42 p.m.

Documents Distributed:

- Agenda
- Draft 2.10.22 Executive Committee minutes

Minutes taken by Rebekah Boyd.