



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

COUNCIL — *MINUTES*

Date & Time:	Thursday, April 28, 2022, 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.
Location:	Open meeting accessed remotely on Zoom by video, or by telephone
Facilitator:	Trevor McDaniel, Chair

COUNCILOR ATTENDEES:

Paul McLatchy, Ashfield; **Stanley Garland (voting)** and **Joel Cole**, Bernardston; **Heather Butler**, Buckland; **Marguerite Willis (voting)** and **Sarah Reynolds**, Charlemont; **Kevin Fox**, *Secretary/Clerk*, Colrain; **Erica Goleman**, Conway; **Trevor McDaniel**, *Chair*, Deerfield; **William Bembury**, Erving; **Charles Garbiel**, Gill; **Brian DeVriese**, Heath; **Steve Ellis**, Montague; **Wayne Hachey**, New Salem; **Bee Jacque**, Northfield; **Jane Peirce**, Orange; **Rita Farrell**, Shutesbury; **Tom Fydenkevez**, Sunderland; **Lynn Sibley**, Whately; **Jay DiPucchio**, Regionally Elected; **Bill Perlman**, Regionally Elected;

REGRETS: **Dani Letourneau**, Greenfield; **Patricia Duffy**, Leverett; **Michele Giarusso**, Leyden; **Janice Boudreau**, Rowe; **Bob Manners**, Shelburne. **ABSENT:** **Hussain Hamdan**, Hawley; **Carla Davis-Little**, Monroe; **Michael Idione**, Wendell; **Alan Genovese**, Warwick; **Julia Blyth**, FRPB.

FRCOG STAFF: **Linda Dunlavy**, Executive Director; **Claire McGinnis**, Finance Director; **Rebekah Boyd**, Admin Services Coordinator; **Phoebe Walker**, Director Community Services; **Mark Maloni**, Communications Manager; **Tracy Rogers**, Emergency Preparedness (EP) Program Manager; **Randy Crochier**, Cooperative Public Health Service (CPHS) Program Manager; **Lisa Danek Burke**, CPHS Public Health Agent; **Kurt Schellenberg**, CPHS Public Health Agent; **Nick Licata**, EP Assistant Planner; **Val Woodring**, Senior EP Planner.

GUESTS: **Bill Etter**, **Brian Neal**, and **Scott Rice** of the Ardent Decisions Group; **Doug Telling**, Charlemont Board of Health; **Mae Tanner**, Charlemont Board of Health; **Barbara Gordon**, Heath Board of Health; **Carolyn Shores Ness**, Deerfield Select Board; **Philippe Simone**, GCTV.

1. Call to order and roll call	Chair Trevor McDaniel
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The chair convened the remote meeting at 5:34 p.m. Roll call was taken and quorum was met with 19 members and 67.438 % of the weighted vote of the total membership in attendance.

2. Adopt 1/28/22 minutes	Chair Trevor McDaniel
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Tom F. moved to adopt the 1/28/22 meeting minutes. Wayne H. seconded the motion, which passed with 3 abstentions, and the remaining 16 members in favor.

3. Council Update	Chair Trevor McDaniel
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Trevor briefed the Council about his experience at the Western MA Municipal Conference held in Easthampton in April and hosted by the Massachusetts Select Board Association. The FRCOG was one of the co-sponsors and helped to plan the event. With nearly 100 people in attendance, the day proved perfect for networking and info-sharing among municipal officials, he said. The conference

opened with a legislative panel, featuring Sen. Jo Comerford and Reps. Natalie Blais and Daniel Carey. They discussed the next distribution of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. Workshops such as Police Reform, Economic Recovery from the Pandemic, Post-Pandemic Housing Affordability, and Public Infrastructure, were among those offered.

4. Executive Committee Update

Bill Perlman

At its monthly meetings, the FRCOG Executive Committee:

- Learned of the radio system’s migration progress and of efforts made to clarify FRCOG’s continued role as an liaison between Franklin County towns and the state’s Executive Office of Technology Services and Security.
- Discussed the COVID-19 After-Action Review conducted by the Ardent Group.
- Reviewed, discussed, and approved the agreement in principle document addressing recreational facilities related to the FERC relicensing of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage and Turners Falls Hydroelectric facilities.
- Considered and approved appointment of Andrew Bresciano, a Greenfield Savings Bank employee and of Turners Falls resident, to the Franklin Regional Housing & Redevelopment Board of Commissioners.

5. Executive Director Update

Linda Dunlavy

Linda updated the Council on recent FRCOG projects and initiatives including the following:

Annual Report Councilors attending the meeting in person received hardcopies of the FRCOG’s FY21 Annual Report. Those attending remotely will receive them via USPS. The report represents the scope and goals of FRCOG work initiated, continued, or completed in 2021.

COMIRS An engineering firm is writing a decommissioning plan for the old analog radio system, which will recommend that old equipment be removed so as to have minimal impact on the existing system. The plan will also suggest who might want our existing equipment (such as EOTSS), and which pieces may be valuable to sell to interested parties. A bid for a contractor to remove equipment and towers will be issued, once a solution for voice-over paging is found.

Municipal Funding Sessions In collaboration with others, FRCOG is offering a series of virtual workshops on state and federal grant opportunities throughout the spring of 2022. All materials from earlier workshops are available on the website. Remaining funding opportunities sessions: Health and Human Services (May 10); MA Historic, Community Compact, and Mass Cultural Council (May 24); Broadband Digital Equity (June 7).

Covid Actions in May FRCOG’s Cooperative Public Health Service is still busily working on Covid-19 contact tracing, and assisting with planning and staffing a series of 12 Covid-19 vaccine clinics.

Traffic Counting Linda recommended that Councilors and town officials contact the FRCOG if municipal volume counts, speed counts, intersection turning counts, or off-road counts of pedestrians or bikes is needed.

6. Finance Committee Update

Claire McGinnis

In Finance Committee Chair Michele Giarusso’s absence, Claire reported that the audit for FY21 was completed and returned with no significant issues or deficiencies identified. FY22, she said, was on track for both revenues and expenses.

7. Franklin Regional Planning Board Update

Julia Blyth

Planning Board representative, Julia Blyth, was unable to attend. No report this meeting.

8. Special Project Presentation

Linda Dunlavy

- **Covid-19 After Action Review (AAR) Findings** Bill Etter, Brian Neal, Scott Rice/ Ardent Group

Before the presentation, Linda explained that among staff and the Executive Committee, questions regarding process, authority, and responsibility, arose throughout the FRCOG's pandemic response, leading staff and committee members to pursue an external review of the FRCOG's work and that of the region.

Ardent Decisions Group is the consulting firm hired to examine the FRCOG's COVID-19 coordination efforts and make recommendations regarding the response role of the FRCOG in future wide-scale or long-duration emergencies in the county. Their presentation was the result of a broadly distributed survey, 1-on-1 interviews, and focus group. Ardent recommended principles, agreements, structures, and plans that should be in place for regional response coordination. Among these, the consultants proposed that FRCOG staff and officials:

1. Meet to determine that new authorities are needed
2. Map out the current roles of the FRCOG staff
3. Reorganize the agency's internal structure with emergency preparedness moved out from under the planning department to become a stand-alone emergency management department
4. Move public health preparedness (MAPHCO) from emergency preparedness to a stand-alone public health department
5. Expand and formalize multi agency coordination center
6. Create a single FRCOG Emergency Coordination Plan and strengthen the Franklin County Regional Emergency Planning Committee (REPC)
7. Develop a new process for communication to prevent emanation of redundant, inconsistent, or conflicting information by the FRCOG

Linda followed the presentation assuring Councilors that the AAR is a path to discussion, with nothing predetermined. FRCOG is committed to providing quality service efficiently and effectively and serving towns as needed. Per discussion about the confusion between county-wide services and CPHS services, going forward, staff agree that it will be important to clarify the difference between public health services provided as part of the 26-town FRCOG membership, and the additional services afforded by membership in the Cooperative Public Health District.

Members responded to the AAR with gratitude and the sense that reflection was necessary at this important moment of relative calm, when strategic decisions can best be made about emergency planning and preparation for the future. Councilor responses included: frustration from several South County reps regarding the state's decision to move away from using the county's many Emergency Dispensing Sites (EDS), and to instead select centralized entities to administer vaccination; a request for a universally understood and applied definition of public health; an appeal for a centralized emergency building for use as for storage, meetings space, deployment, training, and so on; a request for a decision-making infrastructure that employs strong project managers and operations people, and a process that gives communities a voice; an endorsement for resource-sharing models; approval for FRCOG's personal protection equipment (PPE) bulk purchasing early in the pandemic, and the speed

with which an emergency Council meeting was set in order to consider spending; a request for more or different technical assistance; deep appreciation for FRCOG response compared to that of the federal and state response; and an urging to carefully consider the questions of authority.

FRCOG staff will send the AAR to select boards and other officials soon.

9. Business Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance/ Adjournment	Trevor McDaniel
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Tom Fydenkevez moved to adjourn, Bill P. seconded, and by voice vote, the motion passed with all in favor. The meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

Documents Distributed:

- Agenda
- Draft minutes of the January 27, 2022 meeting
- April 2022 FRCOG Council/Programmatic Updates
- Covid-19 After Action Review (AAR) slideshow

Minutes taken by Rebekah Boyd.