



Franklin Regional Council of Governments

COUNCIL — *MINUTES*

Date & Time:	Thursday, July 21, 2022, 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.
Location:	Allen Room, John Olver Transit Center, 12 Olive St., Greenfield, MA
Facilitator:	Trevor McDaniel, FY23 Chair

COUNCILOR ATTENDEES:

Paul McLatchy, Ashfield; **Stanley Garland**, Bernardston; **Heather Butler**, Buckland (5:33 p.m.); **Trevor McDaniel**, *Chair*, Deerfield; **Brian Smith**, Erving; **Greg Snedeker**, Gill; **Dani Letourneau**, Greenfield; **Will Cosby**, Hawley; **Brian DeVriese**, Heath; **Michele Giarusso**, Leyden; **Bee Jacque**, Northfield (5:33 p.m.); **Bob Manners**, Shelburne; **Ellen McKay**, Shutesbury; **Tom Fydenkevez**, Sunderland; **Michael Idione**, Wendell; **Hannah Davis**, Whately; **Emily Johnson**, FRPB; **Jay DiPucchio**, Regionally Elected; **Bill Perlman**, Regionally Elected.

REGRETS: **Kevin Fox**, Colrain; **Carla Davis-Little**, Monroe; **Steve Ellis**, Montague; **Carl Seppala**, New Salem; **Jane Peirce**, Orange; **Janice Boudreau**, Rowe;

ABSENT: **Phil Kantor**, Conway; **Alan Genovese**, Warwick; **Vacancy**, Leverett.

FRCOG STAFF & GUESTS: **Linda Dunlavy**, Executive Director; **Rebekah Boyd**, Admin Services Coordinator; **Claire McGinnis**, Finance Director; **Philippe Simone**, GCTV.

1. Call to order and roll call of in-person meeting	Chair Trevor McDaniel
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The chair convened the meeting at 5:31 p.m. Roll call was taken and both simple and financial quorum were met with 16 members and 58.74% of the weighted vote of the total membership in attendance. At 5:35 three more members arrived, bringing the weighted vote up to 67.42%

Before reorganizing, Trevor welcomed and introduced new Council members: Will Cosby, Hawley Selectboard Chair; Hannah Davis, the new Community Development Administrator and Assistant Town Administrator in Whately; and Emily Johnson, the appointee from the Franklin Regional Planning Board on which she serves as a member-at-large from Deerfield.

2. Reorganization and Report of Nominating Committee	Chair Trevor McDaniel
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Trevor announced that staff typically forms a Nominating Committee to re-examine the membership and determine a new slate of officers before the July Council meeting, but this did not occur this year. With apologies to the Council, Trevor asked to reorganize this year by taking nominations from the floor. Consensus from Councilors affirmed this suggestion. Linda noted that all of the current FY22 officers agreed to serve for FY23. They are: **Chair** – Trevor McDaniel from Deerfield; **Vice Chair** – Greg Snedeker from Gill; **Clerk** – Kevin Fox from Colrain; **Council Appointments to Executive Committee** – Kevin Fox from Colrain and Roxann Wedegartner from Greenfield.

Bill Perlman nominated the standing slate of officers. With no additional floor nominations, the chair closed the nominations. **Bob Manners moved to elect the current slate of officers to serve another year, seconded by Bee Jacque. The motion passed with all Councilors in favor.**

3. Adopt 4/28/22 minutes

Chair Trevor McDaniel

Paul McLatchy moved to adopt the 4/28/22 meeting minutes. Dani Letourneau seconded the motion, which passed with all Councilors in favor.

4. Council Update

Newly Elected Chair, Trevor McDaniel

Trevor announced that the Council will meet next on **October 20, 2022**, to discuss the FY23 Budget, and again on **January 26, 2023**, to vote on the budget proposal. The final FY23 meeting is **April 23, 2023**.

Committee Vacancies

Trevor urged members who may not have yet volunteered for Council committees to step forward to fill Finance and Personnel Committee vacancies, to be more involved with Council operations. He also announced that Jane Peirce, current FRCOG Councilor and select board member from Orange is running for the regionally elected seat that Bill Perlman leaves open as when he retires this year.

5. Executive Committee Update

Bill Perlman

At its monthly meetings, the FRCOG Executive Committee:

- Convened as the Economic Development District Governing Board for a presentation and vote on the *2022 Franklin County CEDS Annual Performance Report*. This is the second annual report on the 2020, 5-year CEDS Plan, which articulates goals, provides updated socio-economic data, notes progress made on action plan projects, and includes multiple sections specific to the pandemic's effect on the economy.
- Heard a presentation of the *Franklin County Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan (EERP) and Framework*. The EERP captures lessons learned from the pandemic and other shocks to the region, outlines tasks to be undertaken at a time of emergency, and recommends long-term strategies for resilience when the next disaster hits. Unlike other resiliency plans, EERP's focus is solely on economy, not emergency response or public safety.
- Learned of and discussed the progress of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensure of local hydroelectric operations, and considered hiring an attorney to review the settlement, splitting the cost with the Connecticut River Conservancy.
- Discussed succession planning efforts, and learned of the thoughtful and engaging discussions at FRCOG's meetings with municipal officials at all levels, held as part of the process for forwarding the implementation of the *Covid-19 After Action Review*.

6. Executive Director Update

Linda Dunlavy

Linda polled the Council on their meeting preferences in light of the new legislation extending the state Open Meeting Law accommodation for remote meetings through March 2023. Council members voiced an interest in returning to a hybrid meeting for October and January.

Linda updated the Council on recent external advocacy efforts and FRCOG projects and initiatives:

Rural Schools A final report from the Rural Schools Commission provides a strong analysis of the debilitating and stacking issues facing rural schools and a series of thoughtful and meaningful recommendations for the Legislature to consider and implement. The report is not yet unavailable, but will be sent to all members when it is.

Role of FRCOG in Emergencies From the COVID-19 After Action Review meetings held among representatives from a variety of disciplines and towns this spring, FRCOG found that consensus about the role of the FRCOG in future emergencies is one of:

- PPE and equipment managers, keeping equipment current, stocked and inventoried and acting as a single point of contact for single and multi-town equipment and supply needs
- Facilitator and organizer during large-scale, regional emergencies, expanding and enhancing the regional Multi Agency Coordination Center (MACC) and activating it quickly
- Communicators acting as a clearinghouse of state and federal guidance (with internal improvements) and providing coordinated messaging across multiple platforms and age groups
- Active emergency responders, if needed, though not routinely expected or needed

Non Point Source Pollution Grant Tool Kit FRCOG staff worked with a consultant to identify locations and develop concepts for best management practices to reduce stormwater runoff and nonpoint source pollution in the Lake Wyola and Bloody Brook watersheds.

Northern Tier Passenger Rail Service A public meeting about the Northern Tier Rail feasibility study was held last month to summarize existing conditions along the corridor and to begin creation of a Massachusetts Rail Authority to enable access to new federal funds and support passenger rail expansion through western and central MA. FRCOG is actively engaged in both efforts.

7. Franklin Regional Planning Board (FRPB) Update	Emily Johnson
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Emily reported that the board has recently learned about and discussed the progress of Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing of hydroelectric and pumping station facilities along the Connecticut River, and FRCOG’s involvement in that process. The board has also been hearing about FRCOG’s efforts to assist several towns with required bylaw updates, and took in a presentation on the Forest Climate Resilience Program offered to Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership town landowners, which supports implementation of practices that promote forestry resiliency.

8. Finance Committee Update	Michele Giarusso
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Michele reported that FY22 was a strong year and that the committee met earlier in the week to approve line-to-line transfers for:

Pooled Expenses – Budget overspent by \$91, 406.44 due to an exceptional number of family and medical leaves, and the benefit expenses for new staff., Covered by surplus in budget in other sections of the general fund.

Regional Services Operating — Overspent by \$11,148.97, covered by surplus within this section of the general fund.

Town Accounting — Overspent by \$14,201, covered by internal retained earnings.

Budget Amendments

Staff assumed that when the bulk of the transition to COMIRS was complete that staff involvement related to CoMIRS issues would be greatly reduced. This has not been possible. Twenty hours a week of staff time is still needed to finalize the transition and to ensure FCECS operates until the transition is complete. The FRCOG already employs staff with the skills needed to implement much of this work. Reprogramming of all 1300 radios is needed while the state thinks about digital expansion, and many logistics must be worked out with the state in order to decommission. Staff requested use of \$30,000 of undesignated cash to increase the regional services line for this purpose as well as to increase Regional Emergency Planning Committee (REPC) capacity and for further implementation of recommendations of the Covid-19 After Action Review.

Michele Giarusso moved to transfer of \$15,000 from 01-003 Regional Services Operating to 01-003 Regional Services Personnel in the FY23 general fund expense budget, and use \$15,000 of general

fund balance, for a total increase of \$30,000 to 01-003 Personnel. The increase will be used for the combined purposes of continuing support for the CoMIRS radio system implementation, implementing After Action Review (AAR) recommendations, and increasing Regional Emergency Planning Committee capacity. Greg Snedeker seconded the motion.

Tom Fydenkevez noted that radio use during the fire in Orange exemplified the importance of a functional radio system, and felt further funding of the transition was prudent. Will Cosby said that he understood that the radios are not working well in Hawley and asked if other places also were having difficulties. Linda said there were dead spots within the system and that the state is considering options to reduce problems in Hawley, New Salem, and Erving. Bill Perlman asked that Councilors let the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security (EOTTS) know if they receive an application for tower construction, so these towers can be considered for radio system use.

With no further discussion, Trevor called for a vote. **The budget amendment passed with 66.884 % of the total weighted vote of the membership in favor, and one abstention.**

Michele reported that staff and the finance committee request an increase of \$20,000 to the legal counsel line in the Miscellaneous & Contingency portion of the general fund. This money will be used to hire legal counsel for an upcoming critical phase of the FERC relicensing of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage and the Turners Falls Hydroelectric projects. Half of this increase is to be funded with the general fund balance and the other half reimbursed by the Towns of Montague, Gill, Northfield and Erving.

Michele Giarusso moved an increase of \$20,000 to the FY23 General Fund Miscellaneous & Contingency 01-010 budget to fund legal counsel related to the FERC relicensing of local hydroelectric projects. The increase in the expense budget will be funded with \$10,000 from the general fund balance and \$10,000 in reimbursement from the Towns of Montague, Gill, Northfield and Erving. Ellen McKay seconded the motion, which passed with all in favor.

9. Special Presentations and Discussion Review newly created FRCOG Mission statement

The Council read the draft mission statements written at the staff retreat, discussed it, and offered suggestions for changes. Members appreciated the staff's efforts to create the statement.

10. Business Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance/ Adjournment Trevor McDaniel

The Council took up no additional business.

Tom F. moved to adjourn, Bryan S. seconded. The meeting adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

Documents Distributed:

- Agenda
- Draft minutes of the January 27, 2022 meeting
- July 2022 FRCOG Council/Programmatic Updates
- Draft Mission statements

Minutes taken by Rebekah Boyd.