

PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION (PVPC)

Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting
Thursday, February 22, 2018
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)
60 Congress Street, Large Conference Room
Springfield, Massachusetts 01104

Present were:

Walter Gunn, Chair – Longmeadow
Judith Terry, Vice-Chair – Chesterfield
George Kingston, Treasurer – East Longmeadow
Mark Cavanaugh, Assistant Treasurer – South Hadley
Lynn Arnold – Holland
T.J. Cousineau – Blandford
Michael Marciniec – Palmer

PVPC Staff:

Tim Brennan, Executive Director
Lisa Edinger, Accountant
James Mazik, Deputy Director for Operations/Community Development Section Manager
Catherine Ratte, Principal Planner/Environment and Land Use Section Manager
Lynn Shell, Support Staff

1. Chairman's Call to Order, Welcome and Approval of the Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting Held on January 25, 2018

The February 22nd Executive Committee meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. by Commission Chairman Walter Gunn. Mr. Gunn welcomed everyone in attendance and called for a motion to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2018 Executive Committee meeting.

MOVED BY LYNN ARNOLD, SECONDED BY MARK CAVANAUGH, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 25, 2018 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED.

Mr. Gunn asked if there were any comments, corrections or questions concerning the minutes of the January 25, 2018 Executive Committee meeting but none were forthcoming.

THERE BEING NO QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS, THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 25, 2018 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING WERE APPROVED WITH TWO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS INCLUDING JUDY TERRY AND GEORGE KINGSTON, ABSTAINING FROM THE VOTE.

2. Warrant/Financial Reports

Mr. Gunn asked PVPC Accountant Lisa Edinger to comment on PVPC's January 2018 warrant. Ms. Edinger noted that check #16158, which appears out of sequence on the check listing, is actually a voided check. She explained that a payment in the amount of \$493.29 payable to the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission was lost in the mail and it was subsequently reissued as check #16355. Ms. Edinger also highlighted check #16308 in the amount of \$5,064.20 payable to Behavioral Health Network, Inc. which is for work tied to domestic violence prevention projects and check #16325 payable to the Metropolitan Area Planning Council in the amount of \$8,400 which is for Mass in Motion training and technical assistance activities. There being no questions or comments regarding the January warrant, Ms. Edinger stated that she would next like to review a report entitled *Pioneer Valley Planning Commission Financial Summary Profile* which lists PVPC's account balances through February 22, 2018. Ms. Edinger explained that it was necessary to transfer funds from PVPC's Savings Account at the beginning of February because cash flow has been slow, however, she noted that PVPC expects to receive \$250,000 in District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) funds very soon as well as \$65,000 in MassDOT payments. Ms. Edinger also pointed out that she is currently in the process of

preparing invoices covering the month of January and, therefore, she expects that the Accounts Receivable balance will increase. Mr. Gunn thanked Ms. Edinger for her report and he then moved to take up agenda item 3.

3. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement With the Town of Granville for a Local Pavement Management and Assessment Project

Mr. Brennan stated that he is reporting on this agenda item on behalf of Amir Kouzehkanani, PVPC's Principal Transportation Planner. Mr. Brennan explained that PVPC contracts with local municipalities which are interested in having a detailed assessment made of the pavement conditions within their municipality. He added that the report helps them to attract grants and helps to expend their local Chapter 90 Funds most effectively. Mr. Brennan stated that the Town of Granville officials have decided they'd like the PVPC to move forward with a local pavement management and assessment for their community.

Mr. Gunn called for a motion to address agenda item 3.

MOVED BY JUDY TERRY, SECONDED BY LYNN ARNOLD, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE \$7,200 CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH THE TOWN OF GRANVILLE FOR A LOCAL PAVEMENT MANAGEMENT AND ASSESSMENT PROJECT.

Mr. Gunn asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the subject motion but none were forthcoming.

THERE BEING NO QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS, THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

4. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement With the Town of Pelham to Undertake the Town's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Work Program

Mr. Gunn called on Catherine Ratte, PVPC Principal Planner and Environment and Land Use Section Manager, to address this agenda item. Ms. Ratte stated that the Town of Pelham is one of two communities which has hired the PVPC to undertake the Town's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Work Program. Ms. Ratte noted that Pelham's full award was \$15,000 but the PVPC's contract amount is likely going to be \$10,540. Ms. Ratte explained that PVPC's proposal indicated that PVPC could do the basic work for \$10,540 which could lead to the remaining grant funds being applied to implementation. Ms. Ratte further stated that Pelham decided to contract with the PVPC for the required community resilience building and the Town will decide how to invest any additional grant funds. Ms. Ratte stated that PVPC intends to run a community resilience building workshop in the community; provide the Town with the updated climate maps; and the PVPC will help develop their community-based risk assessment. Ms. Ratte stated that in all, six communities in our region requested and received MVP grant funds, including Belchertown, Holyoke, Northampton, Pelham, Springfield and Ware.

After Ms. Ratte had responded to a series of informational questions raised by Executive Committee members, Mr. Gunn called for a motion to address agenda item 4.

MOVED BY LYNN ARNOLD, SECONDED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT, NOT TO EXCEED \$15,000, WITH THE TOWN OF PELHAM TO UNDERTAKE THE TOWN'S MUNICIPAL VULNERABILITY PREPAREDNESS (MVP) WORK PROGRAM.

Mr. Gunn asked if there were any questions regarding the subject motion but none were forthcoming.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS, THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

5. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement With The Cadmus Group in Order to Provide Consulting Services to the Town of Longmeadow that Will Assist the Town With the Planning and Procurement of a Solar Developer by the Community

Mr. Gunn again called on Principal Planner Catherine Ratte to address agenda item 5. Ms. Ratte reported that the PVPC had applied for a Municipal Energy Technical Assistance (META) grant in the amount of \$12,500 to procure a renewable energy consultant for the Town of Longmeadow and she noted that there were two very qualified consultant firms that

responded. Ms. Ratte stated that Longmeadow subsequently selected The Cadmus Group to provide these desired services and the actual contractual amount with The Cadmus Group will be \$12,442.50. Ms. Ratte stated that the PVPC has performed a high level assessment of Longmeadow's buildings and parking lots to determine where it might be possible to generate solar power. She added that this assessment will now be shared with The Cadmus Group whose representative will meet with Longmeadow officials as they begin to prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit a solar developer who will work directly with the Town.

At this point, Mr. Gunn called for a motion to address agenda item 5 as presented.

MOVED BY JUDY TERRY, SECONDED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE, A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT, NOT TO EXCEED \$12,500, WITH THE CADMUS GROUP IN ORDER TO PROVIDE CONSULTING SERVICES TO THE TOWN OF LONGMEADOW THAT WILL ASSIST THE TOWN WITH THE PLANNING AND PROCUREMENT OF A SOLAR DEVELOPER BY THE COMMUNITY.

Mr. Gunn asked if there were any questions regarding the subject motion but none were forthcoming.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS, THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

6. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement With the Town of Holland to Facilitate a Local, Public Information and Education Program Linked to the Town's Potential Participation in the Commonwealth's Green Communities Energy Program

Mr. Gunn again called on Principal Planner Catherine Ratte to address this agenda item. Ms. Ratte noted that the motion for agenda item 6 refers to "potential" participation in the Green Communities Energy Program, however, she pointed out that the Town of Holland has actually been participating in the Green Communities Energy Program since 2010. Ms. Ratte stated that last year, with assistance from the PVPC, Holland had applied for and received a competitive Green Communities' grant and she noted that the Town will now be able to make additional energy efficiency improvements in its schools. Ms. Ratte mentioned that in preparing Holland's grant application, PVPC had included funding to undertake a public information campaign that will document the work that's been accomplished by the Town of Holland and she pointed out that Holland was the first of the small communities to successfully achieve a 20% reduction in energy usage.

At this point, Mr. Gunn called for a motion to address agenda item 6.

MOVED BY GEORGE KINGSTON, SECONDED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE, A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE \$8,500 CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH THE TOWN OF HOLLAND TO FACILITATE A LOCAL, PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION PROGRAM LINKED TO THE TOWN'S POTENTIAL PARTICIPATION IN THE COMMONWEALTH'S GREEN COMMUNITIES ENERGY PROGRAM.

Mr. Gunn asked if there were any questions regarding the subject motion but none were forthcoming.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS, THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

7. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement With the Town of Hatfield to Facilitate a Local, Public Information and Education Program Linked to the Town's Potential Participation in the Commonwealth's Green Communities Energy Program

Mr. Gunn again called on Principal Planner Catherine Ratte to address this agenda item. Ms. Ratte stated that the dollar amount of the contract identified for agenda item 7 will need to be changed since she explained that the Town of Hatfield had applied for a \$8,500 grant award but they were only granted \$6,020. Ms. Ratte stated that this is a similar project to the one being conducted in Holland, noting that the Town of Hatfield is primarily doing a series of energy efficient lighting upgrades in the schools.

After Ms. Ratte responded to several clarifying questions raised by Executive Committee members, Mr. Gunn called for an amended motion to address agenda item 7.

MOVED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, SECONDED BY LYNN ARNOLD, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE \$6,020 CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH THE TOWN OF HATFIELD TO FACILITATE A LOCAL, PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION PROGRAM LINKED TO THE TOWN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE COMMONWEALTH'S GREEN COMMUNITIES ENERGY PROGRAM.

Mr. Gunn asked if there were any questions regarding the amended motion for agenda item 7 but none were forthcoming.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS, THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

8. Follow-up Discussion on Venue and Plans for the PVPC's 2018 Annual Meeting in June

Mr. Brennan noted that at the January Executive Committee meeting, he proposed the idea of using the Irish Cultural Center (ICC) of Western New England, located in West Springfield, as a potential venue for PVPC's 2018 Annual Meeting. Mr. Brennan reported that he and PVPC's Executive Assistant Indrani Gallagher have since visited this facility and have reserved the space for the evening of Thursday, June 14th. Mr. Brennan stated that he is asking the ICC President, Sean Cahillane, and their Executive Director, Bo Sullivan, to speak at the Annual Meeting about the facility and the demographic patterns of the Irish moving to the region as well as the relationship they established with the Government of Ireland. Mr. Brennan noted that he had considered inviting the Consul General of Ireland to attend the Annual Meeting but she will be unavailable at that time.

9. Personnel Issues Including an Update on Staff Recruitment Efforts and Need to Schedule Spring Meetings of the Operations Subcommittee

Mr. Brennan announced that, sadly, the Planning Commission had recently lost a long-standing staff member, Marie Brady, who had worked for the PVPC over the past 20 years. He explained that Marie became ill in early January and never recovered. Mr. Brennan noted that several PVPC staff members attended a memorial service for Ms. Brady earlier this month and her family talked about how much she loved working at the PVPC. Mr. Brennan noted that Marie Brady was 83 and her many contributions to our agency will be sorely missed.

As regards staff recruitment efforts, Mr. Brennan noted that PVPC's Environment and Land Use Senior Planner Larry Smith has decided to retire at the end of June and he reported that PVPC has successfully hired a new senior planner, Susan Westa who will begin working for the PVPC on March 5th. Mr. Brennan stated that Ms. Westa has an extensive background in planning work and she is currently the Community Engagement Director at the Connecticut Main Street Center in Hartford. Mr. Brennan next reported that recruitment is now underway for a new Transit Planner. He explained that PVPC's Transit Planner Dave Johnson has been ill and he is planning to retire within the next month or so. Mr. Brennan also stated that the PVPC has just advertised for a Data Analyst who will work with Molly Goren-Watts who oversees PVPC's Regional Information Center. Mr. Brennan noted that the PVPC has been getting increasingly involved in a wide range of data projects such as new contracts with the Davis Foundation and the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts. In addition, early stage preparations for the 2020 U.S. Census is a key priority for the PVPC and an area this new staff member will be heavily involved in.

10. Executive Director's Highlights Including an Update on Ongoing Efforts to Work With the Commonwealth's Retirement Funding Obligations Working Group

Mr. Brennan reported that the Massachusetts State Rail Plan has been released by MassDOT and he noted that the deadline for the comment period was extended, as PVPC had requested, until March 2nd. Mr. Brennan stated that on the positive side, the Plan will include adding service on the Knowledge Corridor north of Springfield and upgrading the New England Central Railroad freight corridor to the modern weight standard. As regards the east west rail connection, Mr. Brennan noted that unfortunately the state has decided that this project warrants further study. Mr. Brennan stated that other groups in our region have been urged to comment on the State Rail Plan as well but it was uncertain how much impact this will have.

Mr. Brennan next reported that the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) is facing deep service cuts due to a budget shortfall in the vicinity of \$3.1 million beginning July 1st and he noted that this is a major issue which could have serious harmful effects on people and the economy. Mr. Brennan remarked that the Regional Transit Authorities across the Commonwealth have been level-funded for the fourth straight year which essentially translates to a cut. Mr. Brennan

noted that last year the PVTA reduced service by about 4%. He stated that this year the cuts will need to be closer to 16% and there will also be a fare increase of 25%. Mr. Brennan commented that there have been a lot of outreach meetings and public hearings and he noted that the PVPC is trying to respond to advocacy campaigns that are principally aimed at the State Legislature to try to increase funding to fix the PVTA's \$3.1 million shortfall. Mr. Gunn asked if the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) also raised their fares by 25%. Mr. Brennan stated that the MBTA has begun that discussion noting that they are now forecasting a shortfall of over \$115 million. Mr. Brennan also stated that there is a 1¢ sales tax across the Commonwealth devoted exclusively to the MBTA and he noted that for our region, this tax amounts to an estimated \$65 million that goes in to support the MBTA.

Mr. Brennan then talked about two ballot questions that could potentially appear on the 2018 ballot in the fall. He stated that one question is the Fair Share Amendment also known as the Millionaire's Tax which would mean that all income over a million dollars would be taxed with a 4% surcharge. Mr. Brennan stated that this is projected to yield \$2 billion which theoretically would be split between education and transportation and he noted that the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court will probably decide by May or June if this measure can appear on the ballot. Mr. Brennan noted that although polling is high in public support, there has been a lot of pushback given the new federal tax bill that is anticipated. Mr. Brennan stated that the second proposed ballot question would reduce the state sales tax from 6.5% to 4.5%. Mr. Brennan remarked that this would amount to a loss of over \$1.2 billion from the state revenue stream which would affect many programs and he noted that a lot of cuts would come out of local aid, education and environmental programs. Mr. Brennan stated that the public polling on this measure currently shows a 75-80% level of approval. Mr. Brennan underscored that these issues need to be elevated so that people will pay attention to what the implications would be if these measures were to pass next fall.

Mr. Brennan next stated that efforts are underway to secure funds from the state environmental bond bill for environmental cleanup and he pointed out that Congress no longer allows federal budget earmarks. Mr. Brennan stated that about \$3 million in environmental bond funds have been secured thus far and the current campaign is to try to secure \$7 million. Mr. Brennan noted that a legislative delegation and the mayors of the most affected cities are being asked to weigh in on this.

Mr. Brennan reported that PVPC has received the District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) contract which was received by the PVPC later than usual. Mr. Brennan stated that one of the DLTA projects is a model zoning bylaw for recreational marijuana that PVPC Senior Planner Larry Smith is working on and he noted that the final regulations are due by March 15th. Mr. Brennan stated that the PVPC has been urging moratoriums in order to give municipalities until December 31, 2018 to act, noting that letters were sent to PVPC's member cities and towns in September. Mr. Brennan also noted that there has been push-back led by the Governor about certain aspects of the regulations particularly in the areas of café consumption and home deliveries.

Finally, Mr. Brennan reported that based on the action taken at the February 8th Commission meeting, advance notices were recently sent to all of the PVPC's 43 member communities regarding the new local assessment fees for Fiscal Year 2019.

At this point, Mr. Gunn announced that there are two items that will require convening a meeting of the PVPC's Operations Subcommittee during the spring. Mr. Brennan explained that a PVPC staff member had asked about changes to PVPC's Educational Assistance Program and given that this is a time sensitive matter, Mr. Brennan observed that any potential changes will ideally need to be made before June. Mr. Gunn noted that the second item to be addressed at the Operations Subcommittee meeting will be the Executive Director's 2017 Annual Performance Evaluation.

11. Other Business

11a. - Authorization to Commit an Additional \$11,000 of PVPC Local Funds to the Planning Commission's Special Projects Funding Pool for the Second Half of Fiscal Year 2018

Mr. Brennan explained that PVPC local funds are used to provide free technical assistance to our municipalities. Mr. Brennan noted that additional funds are needed to cover the second half of Fiscal Year 2018 which would include \$2,000 for the Land Use Section, \$5,000 for the Data Section and \$4,000 for Historic Preservation projects.

Mr. Gunn called for a motion to address agenda item 11a.

MOVED BY GEORGE KINGSTON, SECONDED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO COMMIT AN ADDITIONAL \$11,000 OF PVPC LOCAL FUNDS TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION'S SPECIAL PROJECTS FUNDING POOL TO COVER THE SECOND HALF OF FISCAL YEAR 2018 (I.E. JANUARY 1, 2018 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2018).

Mr. Gunn asked if there were any questions regarding the subject motion but none were forthcoming.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS, THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

Mr. Gunn asked if there was any other business to discuss. Ms. Terry mentioned that she would like to offer a suggestion for anyone needing more information on recreational marijuana. Ms. Terry recommended visiting the MARPA website noting that a wide range of current information related to this topic can be found under *Recreational Marijuana Resources*.

There being no further business for the Executive Committee to conduct, Chairman Gunn called for a motion to adjourn the February 22nd Executive Committee meeting at 4:50 p.m.

MOVED BY GEORGE KINGSTON, SECONDED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, TO ADJOURN THE FEBRUARY 22, 2018 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING AT 4:50 P.M.; ALL THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE MOTION.

Mr. Brennan then thanked Executive Committee members for attending today's Executive Committee meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Douglas Albertson, Secretary/Clerk

List of Documents and Other Items Distributed at the February 22, 2018 Meeting

1. Executive Committee February 22, 2018 Meeting Agenda and Suggested Motions
2. Executive Committee January 25, 2018 Meeting Minutes
3. PVPC Warrant: January 1, 2018 through January 31, 2018
4. PVPC Financial Summary Profile as of February 22, 2018